Hafa Adai!

Deluge of support for DCCA secretary's appointment. PAGE 2
GCA's Pajarillaga wins a QuestBridge scholarship. PAGE 7

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 249

www.saipantribune.com | WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2020 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Peter

Peter draws strong support as NMI's 1st female public auditor

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Kina Borja Peter, who has been appointed public auditor of the CNMI, obtained strong support from government officials and the private sector during a public hearing yesterday by the House of Representatives' Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations on Capital Hill.

In an interview after the hearing, committee chair Rep. Joel Camacho (R-Saipan) said that they will be working on their report for the next session and that they will expedite this. The next House session will probably be next week.

"Most of the committee members are in support of her nomination," he said.

The Senate has to conduct a separate public hearing on Peter's nomination.

If confirmed by both the Senate and House, Peter will be the first female public auditor in

See PETER on Page 4

Guam gets 1st batch of vaccines

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The first batch of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and its partner, BioNTech, arrived in Guam yesterday via a United

See GUAM on Page 4

'DPL no control over Dynasty as it's on private land'

» DPL chief: Driveway is only public land
» Manibusan says they have no jurisdiction

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Lands has no control over the defunct Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino as its building sits on private

See DPL on Page 4

It's official: Biden won

By MARK SHERMAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Electoral College formally chose Joe Biden on Monday as the nation's next president, giving him a solid electoral majority of 306 votes and confirming his victory in last month's election. The state-by-state voting took on added importance this year because of President Donald Trump's refusal to concede he had lost.

See BIDEN on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Dec. 15, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,106	43	7,149
Recovered	6,413	98	6,511
Active	476	43	519
Deaths	118	1	119
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			96,193

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	113	0	113
Traced via Travel Screening	83	0	83
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			119

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
Red: Least safe
Orange
Yellow
Blue
Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

INSIDE

BUSINESS
MG Mall in San Antonio offers the community a different kind of shopping experience.

PAGE 11

NATION
Attorney General William Barr, one of President Donald Trump's staunchest allies, resigns.

PAGE 12

WORLD
London and its surrounding areas will be placed under the highest level of restriction.

PAGE 13

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Deluge of support for DCCA secretary's appointment

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former House speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero received a deluge of support from the community, Cabinet members, and officials from the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs for his nomination as DCCA secretary during a public hearing by the Senate's Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations at the Senate chamber Friday morning.

No one opposed Deleon Guerrero's nomination during the EAGI's final public hearing whether to confirm or reject his appointment. The committee, chaired by Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian), has already held public hearings on Tinian and Rota.

Cruz said the committee members—himself, Senate vice president Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and Sens. Justo Quitugua (R-Saipan), Vinnie F. Sablan (Ind-Saipan), and Francisco Borja (R-Tinian)—will now deliberate on the nomination.

Deleon Guerrero said he is excited and looks forward to working with DCCA resident directors and employees to continue the work that Robert Hunter left behind and deliver the public service that the people expect from him. Hunter is the previous DCCA secretary; he is now senior policy adviser for the Office of the Governor.

"I want to extend my gratitude to all who have testified, submitted written comments, or who have expressed their support of my nomination, including those who will be doing so today," he said.

Finance Secretary David Atalig, who was among those who testified at the hearing, said Deleon Guerrero is a prominent member of the community with extensive experience in public service. "If confirmed to the position of DCCA secretary, we firmly believe he'll demonstrate similar dedication and utmost respect for the law," Atalig said.

Atalig said Deleon Guerrero has demonstrated an immense capacity for answering the call to represent the people of this community through his years of service.

Prior to his appointment, Deleon Guerrero served as the special adviser for cannabis under the Office of the Governor. From 2002 to 2019, he served as a representative from the 13th through the 20th Legislature. He served as House speaker during the 18th and 19th Legislatures. From 1994 to 2001, he served as historic preservation officer for the Historic Preservation Office under DCCA.

Former House speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, seated, poses with family members and supporters, and members of the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations after a public hearing at the Senate chamber Friday morning. The committee, chaired by Sen. Francisco Cruz (R-Tinian), held the hearing whether to confirm or reject Deleon Guerrero's appointment as secretary of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Scheduled water service interruptions

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public of the following scheduled water service interruptions:

■ n Friday, Dec. 18, 2020, from 9am to 4pm

❖ The purpose of the outage is for CUC Water Operators to perform a service lateral leak located on Isa Drive near the San Vicente Post Office.

❖ Customers in the San Vicente, Upper Dandan Homestead, Naftan and Obyan areas will be affected.

■ Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020, from 9am to 4pm

❖ The purpose of the outage is for CUC Water Operators to perform a leak repair on the existing 4-inch transmission line on Chalan Monsignor Martinez Road near Saipan Travel.

❖ Customers in the San Vicente, Upper Dandan Homestead, Naftan and Obyan areas will be affected.

❖ Water service hours for customers in the Naftan and Obyan areas will be from 6am to 9am and will resume to the regular daily schedule of 9am to 3pm on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, proceed with caution and/or take alternative routes during the period of the waterline repairs.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline at 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(PR)***

PSS offers 'Grab 'n' Go Books'

Library patrons of the Public School System who have a school ID card can now place and pick up "reserves" for physical library books using Atriuum Online Public Access Catalog at https://cnmipss.booksys.net/. Navigate to the link and select your school's OPAC. Bookdrops are also available on campus to receive and quarantine returned materials. "Grab 'n' Go Books" is a pilot program and is available to students at the following schools:

Dandan Middle School
Cathy Borja-Flores (librarian)
catherine.borja-flores@cnmipss.org
670-237-3663

Hopwood Middle School
Janet Sablan (librarian)
janet.sablan@cnmipss.org

Kagman High School
Maria Ornes (librarian)
maria.ornes@cnmipss.org
670-237-3196
www.kagmanlibrary.org

Kagman Elementary School
Natalie Hill-Beyer (librarian)
natalie.hill@cnmipss.org
670-664-3911

Sinapalo Elementary School
Lynne Michael (librarian)
lynne.michael@cnmipss.org
670 532-9521

WSR Elementary School
Art Sondheim (librarian)
arthur.sondheim@cnmipss.org
664-3542 ***(PR)***

Librarians of the Public School System.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Aldan prepares for tourism on Tinian

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As the CNMI gets ready to welcome back tourists after nine months, Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan intends to work with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force on how Tinian will be able to accept tourists back into the island.

According to Aldan, he hopes that the island will be able to bring in tourist in time for their signature events like the island's Pika Festival, Taga Festival, and more. In fact, Aldan is now in the midst of creating a committee that will start preparations for the Pika Festival in February.

Triple J Enterprises, Inc. is currently building a hotel on the island, while Bridge Investment Group is in the process of getting permits to open up what will be called the Tinian Diamond Hotel, Aldan said. These hotels will be able to accommodate more tourists once they are completed. "Right now, we're slowly working on trying to open up our island to tourism," said Aldan.

The Tinian Diamond Hotel is a boutique hotel located in San Jose Village and offers 17 appointed rooms with many having balconies where guests can enjoy ocean views. Other services near the hotel include the American Gun Club, the outdoor firearm shooting range, and the soon-to-open Tinian Diamond Casino.

According to Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres, he expects the partial resumption of tourism from South Korea to the CNMI under a "travel bubble" program that will start next month, January.

The Marianas Visitors Authority board unanimously approved E-Land Group of Companies' proposed plan to carry out the travel bubble in the CNMI with the first batch of tourists expected to arrive on Jan. 8 via a charter flight.

Aldan hopes that Tinian will open up a casino by next year in April, or in the summer.

Right now, Seabees from the U.S. Navy are on Tinian and are busy laying the groundwork for the planned divert airfield project of the U.S. Air Force.

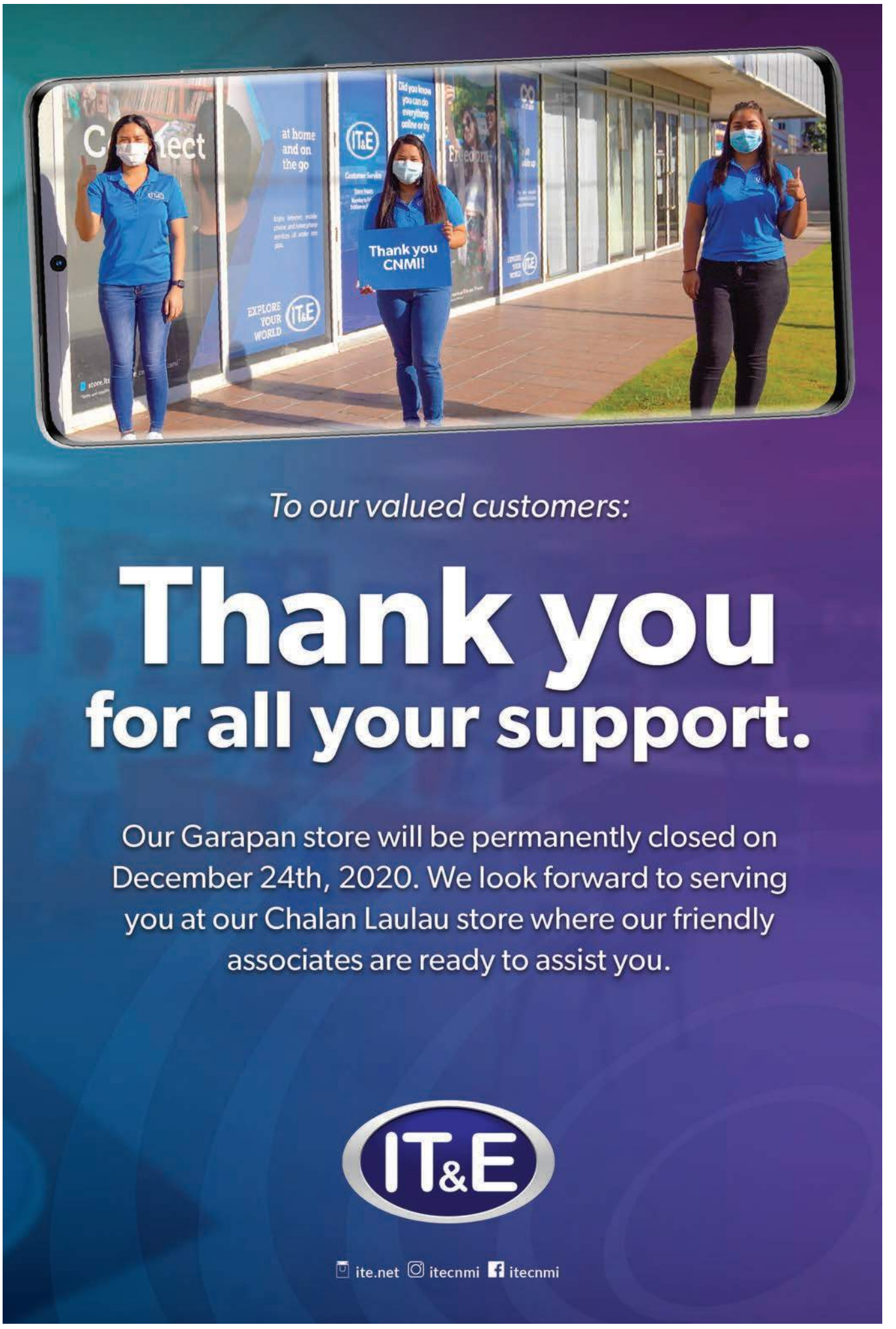
IT&E to close Garapan Wireless Express Center

For 12 years, the Wireless Express Center in TSL Plaza has been providing outstanding service to the residents of Saipan. It is with a heavy heart that IT&E announces that the location will be closed effective Dec. 24, 2020.

"We thank the community for patronizing our Wireless Express Center. Since the center opened more than a decade ago, technology has changed and advanced, but our friendly customer service and strong relationship with our customers has always been constant. We remain committed to providing the world-class service and products our customers expect," said Rose Soledad, IT&E CNMI general manager.

For assistance, customers can chat live with a customer service representative online at ite.net, call the Customer Care Center at 682-4483, or visit our Chalan Laulau location Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 3:30pm.

The Wireless Express Center opened in 2008, when the smartphone and wireless data were first entering the market. The center provided a place for customers to learn more about new mobile technology, purchase products, and make payments. ***(PR)***


Thank you CNMI!
To our valued customers:
Thank you
for all your support.
Our Garapan store will be permanently closed on December 24th, 2020. We look forward to serving you at our Chalan Laulau store where our friendly associates are ready to assist you.
IT&E
ite.net itecnmi itecnmi

BOE to hold its last meeting for the year

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 16th CNMI Board of Education will hold its last meeting today, Dec. 16, during which they will announce the results of the evaluation they did on Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada.

According to BOE member Andrew Orsini, they will also recognize outgoing board chair Janice Tenorio and member MaryLou Ada for their service to the institution. Ada served the BOE for 12 years, while Tenorio served for eight years. Their terms will end in January 2021.

"We want to thank them for the many years of service and dedication. They have given their all to the Public School System. I appreciate the friendship we have established in the board," Orsini stated. He also expressed appreciation to former BOE teacher representative Paul Miura and BOE member Philip Mendiola-Long for their services.

It will also be learned in today's board meeting whether the board will retain or terminate Ada's services as PSS chief. The board completed its performance evaluation on Ada, who has a four-year contract, last Dec. 9.

Orsini, whose first term with the BOE started in January 2019, said the current board has done "pretty good."

"Considering all the challenges and obstacles we as a board had to endure, we very much survived in following through the mission and operation in continually educating the children of the CNMI," Orsini said. He credits this to the "collaborative efforts" of key management, principals, vice principals, teachers, support staff, and parents, and the PTSA.

Next year, Maisie B. Tenorio and Herman Manglona Atalig will join the board.

PETER

From Page 1

the CNMI.

Among those who testified to support her nomination were Finance Secretary David Atalig, Commerce Secretary Mark Rabauliman, representative-elect Angel Demapan, Zoning board chair Tatiana Babauta, Saipan Chamber of Commerce board member and Governor's Economic Council of Advisors member Alex A. Sablan, and Alcohol Beverage and Tobacco Control Division director David R. Maratita. Many other people sent the committee written expressions of support.

Peter, who returns to the CNMI after working in the U.S. mainland, said it has been her goal to return to the CNMI and apply everything she had learned to help the Commonwealth.

"I want to contribute to the CNMI and serve the public's interest," Peter told the committee.

She said as a certified public accountant she has ethical standards and a code of conduct to protect the integrity of the profession. "I am responsible for exercising sensitive, professional and moral judgment in my activities," Peter said.

She said she is required to accept the obligation of acting in a manner that will serve the public interest, honor the public trust, and to demonstrate her commitment to professionalism.

She said she has carried a professional license for over 16 years and has worked extremely hard to maintain her designation. "I would never compromise this and hold myself accountable to my profession and professional ethical responsibilities," Peter said.

She said the foundation of all her experience was built on working as an auditor for Deloitte, both as staff and at the senior level.

While working for Deloitte on Saipan, Peter said she gained exposure to government accounting and auditing standards. Peter said she led audits for government agencies not just in the CNMI but also across Micronesia.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres appointed Peter last Nov. 25 to replace outgoing public auditor Michael Pai, who was appointed by then-governor Benigno R. Fitial and served for 12 years.

Press secretary Kevin Bautista, who introduced Peter to the committee at the hearing, said that Peter is a former senior finance leader, senior accountant, senior manager, and accounting manager for Boeing.

Bautista said Peter comes back to the CNMI as a certified public accountant licensed in the State of Washington and has over 20 years of accounting experience with Deloitte, a Big 4 audit firm in the CNMI and Seattle, Washington and, most recently, for Boeing Company.

Peter is married to Rep. Marco T. Peter (R-Saipan).

Kina Borja Peter and her husband, Rep. Marco T. Peter (R-Saipan) pose with family members, supporters, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations after a public hearing yesterday on Kina Peter's nomination as public auditor of the CNMI.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

BIDEN

From Page 1

Heightened security was in place in some states as electors met to cast paper ballots, with masks, social distancing and other pandemic precautions the order of the day. The results will be sent to Washington and tallied in a Jan. 6 joint session of Congress over which Vice President Mike Pence will preside.

For all Trump's unsupported claims of fraud, there was little suspense and no change as all the electoral votes allocated to Biden and the president in last month's popular vote went officially to each man.

Biden handily beat Trump, who had 232 electoral votes, a 74-vote margin that Biden noted Trump had called a landslide when he won by that much in 2016. On Election Day, the Democrat topped the incumbent Republican by more than 7 million in the popular vote nationwide.

California's 55 electoral votes put Biden over the top. Vermont, with 3 votes, was the first state to report. Hawaii, with 4 votes, was the last.

"Once again in America, the rule of law, our Constitution, and the will of the people have prevailed. Our democracy—pushed, tested, threatened—proved to be resilient, true, and strong," Biden said in an evening speech in which he stressed the size of his win and the record 81 million people who voted for him.

He renewed his campaign promise to be a president for all Americans, whether they voted for him or not, and said the country has hard work ahead on the virus and economy.

But there was no concession from the White House, where Trump has continued to make unsupported allegations of fraud.

Trump remained in the Oval Office long after the sun set in Washington, calling allies and fellow Republicans while keeping track of the running Electoral College tally, according to White House and campaign aides. The president frequently ducked into the private dining room off the Oval Office to watch on TV, complaining that the cable networks were treating it like a mini-Election Night while not giving his challenges any airtime.

DPL

From Page 1

land, according to DPL Secretary Marianne Concepcion-Teregeyo yesterday.

When asked who owns the Tinian Dynasty building now, Concepcion-Teregeyo, through her special assistant, Deveney Dela Cruz, said the only public land that Tinian Dynasty leases from DPL is the entryway/driveway.

"The entire building sits on private land and we cannot answer any questions because it is not under our custody," Dela Cruz said, quoting the DPL secretary.

A concerned citizen raised the question about Tinian Dynasty's ownership now and whether it is true that the statute of limitations has run out on the U.S. Department of Justice's lien against the Tinian Dynasty. The concerned citizen said if there is no lien, then the Tinian Dynasty building could at least be sold to someone who could refurbish it sufficiently to accommodate construction teams that are doing the Tinian divert airfield projects.

When asked by *Saipan Tribune* about these matters, Office of the Attorney General public information officer Carla Torres said yesterday that, according to Attorney General Edward Manibusan, the subject matter does not relate to the Office of the Attorney General as their office was not involved except for some labor issues they undertook on behalf of the CNMI-Only Transitional Workers employees.

Last year, Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan told *Saipan Tribune* that it's Mega Stars Overseas Ltd. that has management rights over the Tinian Dynasty property. Aldan stated at that time that Mega Stars is still looking at an opportunity to reopen the property, either as a hotel or just a casino.

The mayor also said that the municipal government does have an open communication line to Mega Stars' representatives.

Tinian Dynasty's casino operations stopped in August 2015, while the hotel operations halted in March 2016.

In 2018, Chun Wai Chan, a corporate representative of both Hong Kong Entertainment (Overseas) Investments Ltd., owner of Tinian Dynasty, and Mega Stars, disclosed before the U.S. District Court for the NMI that the total outstanding liabilities of Tinian Dynasty has now climbed to over $250 million, excluding the $75 million in civil penalty assessed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network against the company.

GUAM

From Page 1

Airlines flight, while the CNMI awaits confirmation that it will receive the vaccine tomorrow, Dec. 17.

Guam received its first batch of vaccines after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued its Emergency Use Authorization for Pfizer's vaccine last week.

Annette Aguon, Guam's Department of Public Health and Social Services COVID-19 Epidemiology/Surveillance Branch lead, stated in a YouTube video that the first people to receive the initial vaccines are health care workers and residents in Guam's long-term care facilities.

As for the CNMI, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña, said that CHCC plans to hold a vaccination on Saturday if the vaccines arrive on Thursday.

Aguon stated that Guam received a total of 3,900 of the first batch, "Dose A." This will be for health care workers and residents of Guam's long- term care facilities.

Aguon said that DPHSS will work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and CDC's Vaccine and Antiviral Prioritization Policy Committee to determine their order of vaccination. DPHSS will then coordinate in conducting where the health care providers will be inoculated, while the Guam Memorial Hospital and Guam Regional Medical City will receive their allotments to vaccinate their personnel within their facility.

When asked how she feels about being one of the leads of the execution process, Aguon said she is both anxious and excited. "We're always about vaccine saving and protecting lives. This is about flatting the curve and to protect our people, so that the light is at the end of the tunnel to prevent future cases of COVID-19," said Aguon.

She added that safety is a priority when it comes to the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as any other vaccines, and they will be offering a screening before anyone will receive the vaccine. That means testing first for any allergic reaction to the vaccine.

The nation's first COVID-19 vaccine began arriving in states Monday morning, after the government gave the final go-ahead to the shots needed to end an outbreak that has killed nearly 300,000 Americans.

Trucks will roll out Sunday morning as shipping companies UPS and FedEx begin delivering Pfizer's vaccine to nearly 150 distribution centers across the states, said Army Gen. Gustave Perna of Operation Warp Speed, the Trump administration's vaccine development program. An additional 425 sites will get shipments Tuesday, and the remaining 66 on Wednesday.

Initially, about 3 million doses were expected to be shipped nationwide. It was unclear exactly who would receive the first shots, though health care workers and nursing home residents were the priority. Perna said health authorities would decide.

A similar number of shots will be held back for those recipients' second dose, which is needed for full protection from COVID-19.

Perna compared the vaccine distribution effort to D-Day, the U.S.-led military offensive that turned the tide in World War II.

"D-Day was the beginning of the end and that's where we are today," Perna said a news conference. But he added that it would take months of work and "diligence, courage and strength to eventually achieve victory." ***(With AP)***

Torres wants to discuss with AG bill giving CCC more powers

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said Friday he will discuss with Attorney General Edward Manibusan the bill the Legislature just passed that gives more powers to the Commonwealth Casino Commission.

When asked for comments about the bill at a radio news briefing last week, Torres said that important bills that go through his office are routinely reviewed by their legal counsel for himself and they have discussions about them. "It is important we look at every bill that comes here thoroughly," said the governor, pointing out that the newly passed bill will be no exception.

Once a decision is made, then they will let the people know, he added.

"But, as of today, I would like to inform everyone that we would look into it and we'll continue to look at it thoroughly and then we'll go from there," Torres said.

Last Thursday, 20 members of the House of Representatives voted "yes" to the passage of House Bill 21-11, in the form of House Substitute 1, Senate Draft 1, Senate Draft 3, which not only clarifies and enhances the powers of the casino commission but also made changes to the Commonwealth Code, given the commission's unique regulatory oversight of the casino industry in the Commonwealth.

The bill is now before Torres for action.

Vice speaker Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) introduced the legislation in February 2019. The purpose is to grant the CCC with authority as an autonomous agency to effectively and efficiently regulate the casino industry.

The Senate unanimously passed the bill with amendments last March 13.

Under the bill, CCC, and not the Finance secretary as provided under the current Commonwealth Code, shall establish and maintain a CCC regulatory fee fund to be kept separate and apart from the general funds of the government.

The bill also provides, among other things, that CCC shall have the authority to issue a license to a casino licensee. The current law gives the power to issue such a license to the Commonwealth Lottery Commission. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Santos wants port-related workers among those who'll get vaccine 1st

Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) has recommended to the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force to include port-related workers—as well as workers who support e-commerce, or electronic commerce—as essential workers who should first get the vaccine against the COVID-19 virus.

In a letter to COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren F. Villagomez last week, Santos said these port-related workers and other essential operational support functions help provide essential and critical supplies.

"These essential workers are out there putting themselves at risk to allow the rest of us to socially distance," said the senator, adding that these workers are fundamental to the CNMI's response to the pandemic.

Considering that the CNMI is surrounded by water, port-related workers, as well as those who support ecommerce, should also be included among essential workers like law enforcers, educators and critical support staff, the *man'amko* or senior citizens, people with underlying medical conditions, social workers, and others, Santos said.

The lawmaker shared her concern with Villagomez as the CNMI anticipates to receive the vaccine created by Pfizer and its partner, BioNTech, possibly in the next two weeks.

She said she understands that the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. will offer the vaccine first to health care workers and front-line responders as per the recommendation of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Santos said in the event that the CNMI is provided with a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines, states and territories will likely vary in terms of which essential workers will get the vaccine first.

The senator said the COVID-19 Task Force must let the data help determine this list and that she believes it should be a risk-based decision. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

CAR FOR SALE

2016 KIA SEDONA
Silver, 27,500 miles, 6 cyl.
7 seats, Excellent Condition
$9,700.00
Please call 483-5000

Christmas Eve a federal holiday this year

December 24th is extra special this year.

On Friday, President Trump signed an executive order designating Christmas Eve a federal holiday, reported the *New York Post*.

"All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall be closed and their employees excused from duty on Thursday, December 24, 2020, the day before Christmas Day," read the order, according to the outlet.

The order did make exceptions for those workers whose duties require them to work on Christmas Eve.

"The heads of executive departments and agencies may determine that certain offices and installations of their organizations, or parts thereof, must remain open and that certain employees must report for duty on December 24, 2020, for reasons of national security, defense, or other public need," the order further stated.

The news came as a surprise to federal workers who were only expecting to get a half-day of vacation time.

Trump previously gave federal workers the full day off in 2018 and 2019.

According to GovExec.com, President Barack Obama gave federal employees a half-day off when Christmas Eve fell on a Friday in 2009 and 2015. ***(radio.com)***

Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Creative, analytic and **articulate** people working together to provide you an ad design **that sells.**

ADVERTISE *with us!*

Call 670.235-8747 | Visit www.saipantribune.com

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
MUSEUM
OF HISTORY & CULTURE
Christmas
IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN!
TREE COMPETITION
IS BRINGING THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT TO EVERYONE!
OPEN FOR ANY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION OR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS.
JUDGING DATE IS ON DECEMBER 21, 2020.
FIRST PRIZE ~~$500~~ $1,000
SECOND PRIZE ~~$300~~ $500
THIRD PRIZE $200
FOURTH PRIZE $100
& OTHER CONSOLATION PRIZES
TO ALL INTERESTED IN JOINING,
PLEASE CONTACT THE NMI MUSEUM
OF HISTORY AND CULTURE AT 664-2160.

Rape suspect wants charges dismissed

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One of two men accused of raping a woman has asked the court to dismiss the charges against him after the jury trial concluded in a mistrial.

Richmond Keybond, 21, through his lawyer, Cong Nie, had verbally asked Superior Court Associate Judge Theresa Kim-Tenorio to dismiss the charges against him but Kim-Tenorio later told Nie to file his argument in writing why the charges against his client warrant dismissal.

Keybond's co-defendant, Joseph Aquino Saimon, through assistant public defender JP Nogues, told the court that they would work with the prosecution to resolve the case without having to go through another jury trial.

Assistant attorney general Coleen St. Clair informed the court that the parties are working on a change of plea agreement for Saimon.

Kim-Tenorio scheduled a status conference for Jan. 5 to discuss with the parties involved how they would proceed with the case. Kim-Tenorio said she is looking at setting a new jury trial for March if the parties don't come to a resolution by then.

In terms of the decision for the mistrial, Nogues, who represents Saimon, also moved for a mistrial, saying he believes the court made the right choice.

"Every defendant has the right to a fair trial and we were concerned there was an issue here and the court agreed there were risks for that. We'll see where things go from here," he said.

Saipan Tribune tried to solicit comments from St. Clair and Nie about the court's decision for a mistrial but both declined to comment.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Kim-Tenorio said that declaring the mistrial was the only way to ensure justice under the circumstances for the defendants.

Prior to calling the victim up to testify, the court informed the government, represented by St. Clair, that evidence alluding to any prior violent conduct by Saimon against the alleged victim would not be allowed. The government informed the alleged victim of this but she still did so.

Saimon, through Nogues, argued that because of the victim's testimony, there is a high possibility that the jury will consider all alleged actions by Saimon on the day of the alleged incident with an understanding that, if he was violent in the past, he must have been violent during the alleged incident.

As for Keybond, Nie argued that the testimony of the alleged victim would also color the jury's view of him.

MCS, Tribe Marianas tie up for coupon fundraiser

To raise funds and spread the Christmas spirit, Tribe Marianas is offering a special discount for Mount Carmel School's Holiday Coupon Fundraiser. By purchasing a holiday coupon booklet, participants can save three dollars off any of Tribe Marianas' in-store apparel.

The purpose of the fundraiser is to provide the community with a complete booklet of holiday coupons from local establishments. As the COVID-19 pandemic has affected many families and the CNMI economy, this fundraiser also aims to provide families with discounts for this holiday season while also drawing customers to local businesses.

Funds raised by this program will be directly invested in Mount Carmel School's academic programs and services, COVID-19 mitigation resources, and infrastructural improvements as the school aims to increase more face-to-face classes by its second semester.

Only 200 booklets are available for purchase and can be bought at the MCS Business Office from Monday to Friday between 7am and 4pm.

The $50 holiday coupon booklet contains a total of 35 coupons with discounts from partners like Bubba Gump, Couple's Cakery, Fishing Tackle, Great Harvest, Herman's Modern Bakery, Hong Ye Hardware, IT&E, Kensington Resort, Kiki's, McDonald's Saipan, MiscKnicKnacks, Natural Nail Spa, Pao Pao, Surf Club Restaurant, T Bar, The Shack, Tribe Marianas, and Triple J Motors. Participants of the fundraiser can save over $200 this holiday season through the provided discounts alone.

In an effort to raise much needed funds and spread the Christmas spirit, Tribe Marianas is offering a special discount for Mount Carmel School's Holiday Coupon Fundraiser. By purchasing a holiday coupon booklet, participants can save three dollars off any of Tribe Marianas' in-store apparel. For more information, visit www.mountcarmelsaipan.com.
MCS

For more information about Mount Carmel School's Holiday Coupon Fundraiser, visit www.mountcarmelsaipan.com. ***(PR)***

UOG presents: Quarantine Quistmas Quoncert

The University of Guam Latte Tones and the Mangilao Hot Jazz Band invite the community to get in the holiday spirit this weekend by tuning into their virtual holiday show, the "Quarantine Quistmas Quoncert."

The groups will perform two shows: on Friday and on Saturday, both from 7:30pm to 9pm. The performances will be streamed live via Zoom at http://url.uog.edu/QQQ.

"The students have worked diligently in preparing performances to kick off the holiday season," said music professor Randall Johnson.

Each student has individually recorded themselves from a quiet space at home, then staff recording engineers and videographers combined the recordings into a single choral or instrumental performance.

"We also have some stunning vocal and piano solos," Johnson said. "This is a rare opportunity to hear and see the results of student musicians working individually in their own recording spaces."

For more information, contact Johnson at randalljohnson@triton.uog.edu or (671) 787-1913 or Mikaela Oliva at olivam9694@gotritons.uog.edu or (671) 483-6454. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-21-001

ROTA WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PHASE- 2 PROJECT REPLACEMENT OF FLOW METER AND PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE (W17-053)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Rota Water System Improvements Phase 2 Project in Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists, in general removal and installation of gate valve assembly, PRV, flow meter, strainer, pressure gauge and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **120 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **December 3, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Rota Directors Office, Sinapalo, Rota.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-001, Rota Water System Improvements Phase 2 Project Replacement of Flow Meter and Pressure Release Valve"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 22, 2020**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 7, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Purchasing Technician Senior via email - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-21-011

ISLEY BOOSTER II TRANSMISSION AND BOOSTER PUMP UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Isley Booster II Transmission and Booster Pump Upgrade in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of upgrading of existing Isley Booster II Pump Station (IB-2); installation of new transmission line to the existing Dandan tank; rehabilitation of existing IB-2 concrete sump tank, yard piping, aboveground flowmeter and valve station with concrete pad, and all other appurtenances at the IB-2 site; construction of a new chlorine and electrical building; installation of new booster pump system (triplex system); construction of new perimeter security fencing and facility lighting; and restoration of existing asphalt concrete road. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 15, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-011, Isley Booster II Transmission and Booster Pump Upgrade** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 05, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms.

Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 21, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

GCA's Pajarillaga wins a QuestBridge scholarship

Grace Christian Academy announced yesterday that Elijah Joshua Pajarillaga has received a full four-year scholarship to Wesleyan University through the QuestBridge National College Match.

QuestBridge National College Match is a national program that connects high-achieving high school seniors from low-income backgrounds with full four-year scholarships to the nation's top colleges. Out of over 18,500 applicants, QuestBridge selected 6,885 finalists to be considered for the QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship. Pajarillaga was one of the 1,464 finalists who have been officially selected as Match Scholarship Recipients.

"The achievements of our 2020 Match Scholarship Recipients are particularly exceptional in the midst of a year marked by challenging circumstances." said Ana McCullough, CEO and co-founder of QuestBridge

As noted in the official Questbridge press release, this year's Match Scholarship Recipients come from 48 states, including the District of Columbia, as well as the territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico.

These outstanding high school seniors have an average unweighted GPA of 3.93, and 94% are in the top 10% of their graduating class.

GCA

Elijah Joshua Pajarillaga of Grace Christian Academy has received a full four-year scholarship to Wesleyan University through the QuestBridge National College Match.

"As a school administrator, there are few times that we have the honor of working with students who excel and stand out above their peers. Joshua is one of those individuals," said GCA principal Beth Nunez.

Pajarillaga is a high academic achiever who has represented Grace Christian Academy and the CNMI with honor in several national competitions in the United States, including 9th-11th grade for the National Speech and Debate. In addition, he represented the CNMI in Washington, D.C. for the Middle School Academic Championship in which his team won second place nationally. He was also the school's representative to the CNMI Youth Congress last school year and is the Student Council president this school year.

"My exhaustive efforts [haven't been] for naught—that I and other hardworking students in the CNMI are capable of being recognized among our nation's best," he said when asked for comments.

"We are very proud of Joshua and excited for all that God has ahead for him," said Nunez. ***(PR)***

Man who threatened to 'kill' governor sentenced to 6 months

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man who threatened to "kill" Gov. Ralph DLG Torres earlier this year was sentenced to a six-month prison term.

Pedro Ayuyu, 48, who pleaded to one count of disturbing the peace, was sentenced to six months imprisonment, all suspended except for six days and with credit for six days of time served.

Ayuyu also pleaded guilty to one count of assault and battery in a separate case where he assaulted a police officer. In that case, Ayuyu was sentenced to one year, all suspended except for 30 days, to be served day for day without the possibility of parole, early release, weekend release or other similar programs, with credit for time served since Sept. 30, 2020.

After serving his sentence Ayuyu will be placed on supervised probation for two years.

Ayuyu must also pay a fine of $100, court cost of $25, and probation of $240 before the expiration of his probation. Ayuyu must also perform 40 hours of community service at a rate of no fewer than eight hours per month.

Ayuyu was ordered not to have any contact with Torres and he must stay away from the Governor's Office and the Office of the Legislative Bureau during his entire probation period.

Ayuyu is also prohibited from possessing or consuming any alcohol or controlled substances during his probationary period and must attend and complete any recommended counseling by the Community Guidance Center.

According to Saipan Tribune archives, the CNMI Department of Public Safety received a 911 call on Aug. 26, at about 1:20pm, reporting a disturbance at the Legislature on Capital Hill.

At the scene, police officers met with employees of the Legislature who stated that the individual, later identified as Ayuyu, had already left and was headed to the Governor's Office.

While making his way toward the Governor's Office, the individual yelled profanities at others and continually asked where the governor was, yelling that he wanted to "fight" the governor and "kill him."

4.5-magnitude earthquake in Marianas

At 8:43am on Dec. 14, 2020, a report of a 4.5-magnitude earthquake occurred at 21.706°N 143.055°E in the Marianas Islands region. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI Emergency Operations Center-State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
JVA No. 21 – 015

Opening Date: December 04, 2020 • Closing Date: December 17, 2020

POSITION TITLE:	**Warehouse Assistant**
DEPARTMENT:	**CFO/Warehouse**
LOCATION:	**Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,511.00 - $19,850.00 per annum, Non -Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or his/her designee.

Duties:
- The Warehouse Assistant assists with physical inventories of stock, materials and supplies; takes material counts and/or verifies counts.
- Prepares, packs and delivers materials and supplies; receives and responds to division and department material needs and requests.
- Loads and unloads materials and supplies; assists with offloading containers and materials; operates forklift as needed.
- Verifies quantities and quality of materials received; prepares receiving documents and reports; routes and delivers paperwork.
- Maintains order and in worksites and warehouse areas; stocks and restocks inventory materials in designated bin locations; may assist in determining whether materials are scrapped or salvaged.
- Prepares and issues materials for air, sea or postal delivery; reviews pick lists and verifies quantities and material accuracy.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School diploma, GED or (AS) through the Adult Basic Education.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Preparing, packing, issuing and delivering materials and supplies; Verifying material quantities and quality; Providing attention to detail; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- Licensing:
  - Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
  - Forklift Operator license (preferred)

- Physical Demands:
  - Occasional lifting of objects; Subject to standing, walking, sitting, bending, reaching, kneeling, pushing and pulling.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

AMENDMENT NO. 1
Notice of Re-opening of the Distribution of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)-COVID Program Pre-Applications

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) wishes to announce the re-opening of the distribution of pre-applications of the ESG-COVID program made possible through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. As stated on the Office of the Governor's Press Release, dated July 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded the CNMI a total allocation of $1,090,630 in ESG-COVID funds to provide financial assistance for CNMI households, specifically for rental assistance, rental arrears, utility allowance, and security and utility deposits. The assistance period is for a total of (12) months and will be on a first come, first serve basis. NMHC has allocated 25% of the grant for the elderly and disabled population. The purpose of the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)-COVID program is to assist individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic (e.g. furloughed, reduction of hours, living in substandard conditions which poses an increased risk of exposure to the disease, etc.)
- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien
- Must meet the income limits (less than 50% of the area median income). See FY 2020 HUD income limits below
- Must be literally homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless and have no other housing options

Application Steps

- Pick up a pre-application at the NMHC Offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota or print an application made available on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net.
  Link:https://nmhcgov.net/resources/files/2020%20ESG%20Pre-application%20V2%20updated%2006_29_20.pdf
- Once the pre-application is completed and submitted to the NMHC Offices (you may submit at the front office or in the Drop Box located in front of the building), the case workers will assess the pre-application and determine whether the applicant is eligible for the program. If the applicant is eligible, the case worker will schedule an appointment and immediately notify the applicant on the date and time of intake. If an applicant is deemed ineligible, a notification will be sent to the applicant.
- The case worker will inform the eligible applicant of the next steps once the application process has been completed.

If you have already applied for the ESG-COVID program, the NMHC case workers are currently assessing your pre-applications and you will be contacted for the next steps. On August 21, 2020, NMHC stopped taking pre-applications in order to conduct the screening of a significant number of pre-applications and also to conduct case management. ***NMHC re-reoped the pre-application process on October 28, 2020. You may pick up an HESG pre-application at the NMHC, Saipan Central Office, Rota Field Office, and Tinian Field office. The distribution of pre-applications will extend from November 30, 2020 to December 31, 2020.*** Should you have any questions or need special accommodations, please contact Zenie Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, Tricia Tenorio, Planner, or Sweetielyn Sokau, Planning Assistant, at the 234-6866/7689/9447.

NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXX, Issue No. 249

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Suing Facebook won't change the internet the way it must be changed

It's way past time that all of us understand how dominant technology companies have expanded in ways that could threaten American commerce as well as American life.

Companies like Google and Facebook have long taken advantage of the general public's and Congress's lack of awareness about how their businesses were structured to scale in ways that narrowed the internet superhighway to a few lanes. The federal government has now concluded both companies are monopolies and is suing to pull them apart.

The Federal Trade Commission's antitrust suit against Facebook filed last week, along with a similar suit filed by 48 states, represents the serious possibility that Facebook will be broken up and that its "buy or bury" approach to competition will no longer be permitted.

When the government filed an antitrust suit against Google, we warned that it will be a high bar to prove the case. That is true here, too, although the government's allegations that Facebook stifled potential competitors' access to its platform raises troubling questions that Facebook will have to answer.

Whatever the outcome, it will take years of hard-fought litigation to decide.

In the meantime, Congress cannot let the antitrust suits turn its attention from more urgent reforms that are needed for social media.

It's been interesting to watch others come around at last to the desperate need for reform of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. This clause—often called the 26 words that created the internet—is really at the heart of why we have an anti-competitive internet environment.

Companies like Facebook and Twitter dominate social media because Section 230 almost totally insulates them from liability for third-party posts. Why are fake news and grossly libelous hate speech rampant on these platforms? Because the companies have little to worry about from a legal perspective. Only the court of public opinion can hold them responsible.

It's heartening that every side of the political aisle is now howling for reform. But such reform must be thoughtful and drafted to ensure that platforms are not permitted to remain a free-for-all of libel and illegal content. Nor can they be permitted to selectively edit content while enjoying freedom from the liability standards that publishers like this newspaper are held to every day.

This is not a partisan issue. President Donald Trump has called for the repeal of Section 230—albeit in an unproductive way—by threatening to hold up the Defense Authorization bill. President-elect Joe Biden has also called for 230 to be revoked.

So it now appears to be a matter of when, not if, Section 230 is revised.

Such reform must offer a path forward for a fairer internet where people can still interact in the best ways social media

See FACEBOOK on Next Page

Gasp... I can't believe Santa is not wearing a mask! He's going to get the virus!!!
Oh, oh... oh!!! This is going to be a Christmas we won't want to remember!
©2020 CHANEL KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/WNG

Joe Biden's looming legitimacy crisis (and what he can do about it)

By JAMES BROUGHEL
Tribune News Service

James Broughel is a senior research fellow with the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

As a wild 2020 rolls into 2021, President-elect Joe Biden sits in a precarious position. Even as the Trump campaign's election challenges strike out, millions of voters question Biden's legitimacy. He promised to unite a divided country, and now he has to find a way to deliver.

It would be best for Biden—and for the country—to take a cooperative rather than a combative approach. With true bipartisan leadership, there is a surprising amount that might be accomplished even with a Democrat-led House and what's likely to be a Republican Senate (pending the two runoff elections in Georgia). Immigration, entitlements, deficit reduction and regulations are a few areas where this division of power could allow the stars to align for reform.

In one of his first speeches after the media called the election, Biden promised to be a unifying president who will not exacerbate our divisions. While most Americans, this author included, are willing to believe him, he will rapidly lose goodwill if he follows his party's leftmost flank.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren has called on Biden to take an aggressive pen-and-phone strategy out of the Obama playbook, meaning to pursue extensive use of executive actions. This would allow him to bypass what could be a gridlocked Congress. On the other hand, it will almost certainly antagonize Republicans and centrists, and increase the likelihood that Biden is viewed as an illegitimate president—one abusing the tepid trust he earned from a weary American public.

The last election may have been a rejection of Donald Trump's fiery brand of politics, but many observers note that it was also a rejection of far-left policies, due to the many successes of Republicans down ticket. Thus, the president-elect's real mandate is to pursue the types of reforms that all but the most partisan among us support.

There are many more of these opportunities than we realize.

On immigration, former President Barack Obama was able to get a bill through a Republican-controlled Senate, but couldn't convince tea party Republicans in the House to go along. It might be feasible now with Democrats holding the House.

President Obama also failed at entitlement reform due to a breakdown of negotiations with then-Speaker John Boehner. Obama never seemed committed, but Biden has had sensible things to say about the insolvency of Social Security and Medicare. Given that some expect the 78-year-old to be a one-term president, could he achieve the unachievable and address the infamous "third rail" of politics? Rather than pander for votes, he should shore up the precarious finances of these programs.

Entitlement reform would also enable him to defuse another ticking government time bomb: the exploding federal deficit. President Trump was no fiscal conservative. Even without the coronavirus pandemic contributing to a tsunami of federal spending, trillion-dollar deficits were expected to be the new normal. Biden can right this ship if he works across the aisle with Republicans to pass a sensible deficit reduction package.

Finally, regulatory reform can reassure a skeptical mainstream public that Democrats are not an anti-business party controlled by Bernie Sanders, Warren and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Cutting red tape has been a priority of every recent Democratic president, from Jimmy Carter to Bill Clinton to Obama, and Democratic-controlled states have also shown that it's a great way to grow the economy. Rhode Island, under the leadership of Gov. Gina Raimondo, sunset its entire regulatory code in 2018. New Jersey also appears on the verge of historic regulatory reform.

Now is an opportune time. The pandemic has revealed major shortcomings in the regulatory system, as evidenced by the hundreds of regulations waived or suspended during the emergency. Moreover, at nearly 75 years old, the law that governs the federal regulatory process (1946's Administrative Procedure Act) is considered by many to be antiquated and desperately in need of updating.

Biden is in a tough place. Fairly or not, many voters don't trust him. Let's take him at his word when he says he wants to bring the country together. Right now, there is an opportunity for a reasonable, centrist policy agenda that would grant him a legacy— and legitimacy—in the history books.

More importantly, it would make him a president beloved by the entire country, rather than one reviled by half of it. Wouldn't that be nice?

Even with a vaccine, we could be living with COVID-19 for years to come

By JAMES COKER
The Baltimore Sun

James Coker is chair of the Department of Sciences at University of Maryland Global Campus. Email: james.coker@umgc.edu.

Many seem to believe that the eventual development of an effective SARS-CoV-2 vaccine will allow us to return to "normal." If only we can hold on a bit longer, all will be well. But does that view align with science?

The reality is that SARS-CoV-2 will be with us for years to come. Even after a vaccine is available, we will be living with uncertainty far longer than most probably think.

First and foremost, there will be logistical issues to overcome and questions to answer. Who will pay? How much will it cost? Who gets the vaccine first, and why? Finally, will it actually keep us safe?

Food and Drug Administration approval processes and Centers for Disease Control guidelines exist to make sure that all vaccines are safe, and as Peter Marks, director of the FDA Center for Biologics Evaluations and Research, assures us, any FDA-approved vaccine will meet those safety guidelines. But there are other issues to consider.

For one, we need to look at herd immunity and determine how many people in a community need to be immune before the likelihood of person-to-person transmittal is unlikely. If we extrapolate from another highly communicable disease (measles), we see that the required level is very high—somewhere above 90%—while the current FDA guidance for potential COVID-19 vaccines places the bar at 50% or better, equivalent to that of the flu shot.

In other words, if a COVID-19 vaccine is only 50% to 70% effective, achieving herd immunity will be difficult if not impossible.

Several polls (by Pew, Gallup and others) suggest that roughly one in three Americans would refuse a COVID-19 vaccine—even if it were free. Recent measles outbreaks from California to Minnesota to New York underscore the danger of this approach, with all of them occurring in communities with poor vaccination coverage.

A second area of concern involves the virus itself, and it is important that we keep in mind that it is new and we still know very little about it. We can draw on what we know from similar diseases, but that doesn't mean that this virus will act similarly.

We don't have answers yet to even simple questions like, "What concentration of antibody in the blood is needed to confer immunity?" And: "Once the body generates antibodies, will they prevent reinfection? Or: "How long will immunity last? (Studies coming out of the UK suggest that COVID-19 antibody levels decline quite rapidly after infection.)

And, of course, we do not yet know how potent a vaccine might be. Will it require a typical two-dose protocol (like Pfizer's) or will it require regular "booster" shots? One that requires regular boosters will place a heavier load on the health care system, as some will inevitably forget to get a booster and will get infected or reinfected.

A third issue to consider is the effectiveness of a vaccine against multiple strains of COVID-19. Studies of people who have been reinfected suggest that this might be due to genetic changes in the virus. So, a vaccine that is effective against one strain might not confer immunity to another. Any vaccine that is effective in the long term will probably need continuous adjustment, similar to the yearly flu vaccine, with strains evaluated yearly and changed depending on their presence/prevalence in the environment.

Getting this right will require many years of active research and data collection. Any margin of error will also be much lower as the fatality rate for COVID-19 is higher than that of the seasonal flu.

For all of these reasons and more, a return to "normal" is not as close as some seem to think. We must insist that our elected officials continue to invest in keeping us safe, launching a coordinated campaign to encourage people to get vaccinated, increase the number of people that are tested daily and conduct contact tracing on those who test positive. It also means taking equally vital if less visible steps like tracking the strains of SARS-CoV-2 as we do with influenza.

Each of these efforts will require dedicated funding at all levels of government and will only happen if we demand them from the people who represent us. If we don't, this health crisis could be with us for years to come.

The economic cruelty of the pandemic

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

Just when it seemed some of the most disheartening trends in the U.S. economy were finally beginning to reverse, COVID-19 arrived to entrench them.

The pandemic has been a neutron bomb targeted at the prospects of lower income working people. They had finally begun to benefit from the recovery from the Great Recession when the virus ravaged sectors of the economy that disproportionately employ them.

The Washington Post has called the resulting economic damage "the most unequal recession in modern U.S. history." As the paper puts it, starkly, "the less workers earned at their job, the more likely they were to lose it."

The pandemic has hammered restaurants, hotels and places of entertainment, all of which don't pay high wages and tend to employ women and minorities. It has cut a swath through small business. It has slammed workers who can't retreat to home offices for Zoom calls.

In short, it has taken all of the tendencies of our knowledge economy that benefit the better-educated and disadvantage non-college-educated workers and has made them more pronounced, amidst a public health crisis that has also hit the most vulnerable the hardest.

According to a Gallup Poll earlier this year, 71% of people in the top income quintile said they were working from home, whereas 45% of people in the bottom quintile stayed at home and were unable to work.

A National Bureau of Economic Research working paper published in May found that workers in high-proximity jobs impossible to perform from home tend to be "less educated, of lower income, have fewer liquid assets relative to income, and are more likely renters." Workers in such jobs were more likely to become unemployed.

Jobs at the top have bounced back since the spring and affluent people might have more wealth than ever, given the increase in home values and a frothy stock market.

The story is different further down the income scale. According to The Washington Post analysis, Hispanic Americans experienced the sharpest loss in employment with the onset of the pandemic. The young were particularly hard-hit; 20% of those ages 20-24 lost their jobs. Mothers with children ages 6-12, called upon to fill the gaps created by school closings, have been another hard-hit group.

Similarly, mom-and-pop businesses have fared poorly. A survey by Alignable, a small business social network, found nearly 50% of small businesses say they are generating less revenue than they need to stay in business, with travel businesses, gyms and beauty salons at particular risk.

Mass vaccination next year should take the edge off of this economic dislocation, but it's harder to create than destroy. The Federal Reserve estimates that employment won't fully bounce back until 2023.

What is to be done? Policymakers need to realize that when they promulgate COVID-19 restrictions, they are asking the people with the least economic margin for error to sacrifice the most. Congress needs to pass a new stimulus bill to cushion the blow of a natural disaster that has immiserated many millions of people through no fault of their own. And the incoming Biden administration ideally would realize that fashionable causes like climate change need to take a back seat to the pursuit of full economic recovery.

The economic pain is not the worst that the pandemic has wrought, but it cannot be ignored.

My generation is not getting the education our governance requires

By JACK ELBAUM
The Fulcrum

Jack Elbaum is a freshman at George Washington University. The Fulcrum is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news platform covering efforts to fix our governing systems. It is a project of, but editorially independent from, Issue One.

Thomas Jefferson famously said that "an educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people." In other words, in order for the United States to survive as a democracy, its people must be informed.

Jefferson would be rolling in his grave if he saw the state of our country today. The people are far from informed, and that is putting our country in grave danger of collapse.

We live in a country where less than one-third of people can name all three branches of the federal government, where 70% do not know the Constitution is the supreme law of the land—and where 10% of college graduates believe Judge Judy is a justice of the Supreme Court.

If that is not scary enough, the picture is far more concerning among young Americans. Among millennials, 70% say they would be "likely" to vote for a socialist candidate, 36% approve of communism, only 8% can identify slavery as the central cause of the Civil War and a quarter say that "choosing leaders through free elections is unimportant." Young Americans are painfully ignorant of history, too. About a quarter say they view the Holocaust as a myth or had been exaggerated and two-thirds do not know that as many as 6 million Jews were massacred. The bloody history of the Soviet Union is unknown as well; why else would the far-left economic and political systems of the 20th century be making a staggering rebound now?

"Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity," Martin Luther King Jr. said. America is experiencing a pandemic of both right now.

Our deteriorated political discourse is an inevitable byproduct of our ignorance. Radical, revolutionary voices are being elevated over their calmer counterparts. Many in the Democratic Party are now embracing a vision of America that condemns it root-and-branch. They want to end the filibuster and add seats to the Supreme Court. This is a recipe for an implosion of the American ideal. On the right, of course, the continued embrace of President Trump—who has expressed antipathy toward what should be the neutral principle of peaceful transitions of power—is also a reason for concern.

The American experiment has been the greatest and most successful experiment in governance in world history. Now it is at risk of being destroyed by the very people who benefit most from it. In order to restore our country, we must return to first principles. This happens through education.

In suburban Chicago, I was lucky enough to be a part of the first class in my high school for whom a civics course was required. There was absolutely room for improvement but it was a necessary first step taken by my school. Colorado and Idaho have exceptional civics curriculums. The former goes in-depth into American government and the latter emphasizes the importance of this education from a young age.

Their lead should be followed by others across the country. After all, there is a direct relationship between civics education in school and civics knowledge later in life.

If we want to create a more informed populous, we know what must be done. However, only nine states, along with the District of Columbia, require a full year of civics in high school. To ensure that the root ideals of our country are passed onto the next generation, not only more widespread education but also better education is needed.

Our civics classrooms should highlight what makes the United States unique and why we live in a country worth defending. We must be teaching about the value of the separation of powers, checks and balances, an independent judiciary and democracy itself. An abandonment of age-old ideas becomes inevitable when education is not paramount.

It took almost 250 years to make America what she is today. It may only take one generation to see its collapse. The stakes are higher than ever, and it is up to us as to what path we will take.

FACEBOOK

From Page 8

offers but without empowering massive social media firms that distort the public conversation without consequence.

Reforming the internet can't wait for these cases to be concluded. Congress must act as soon as possible.

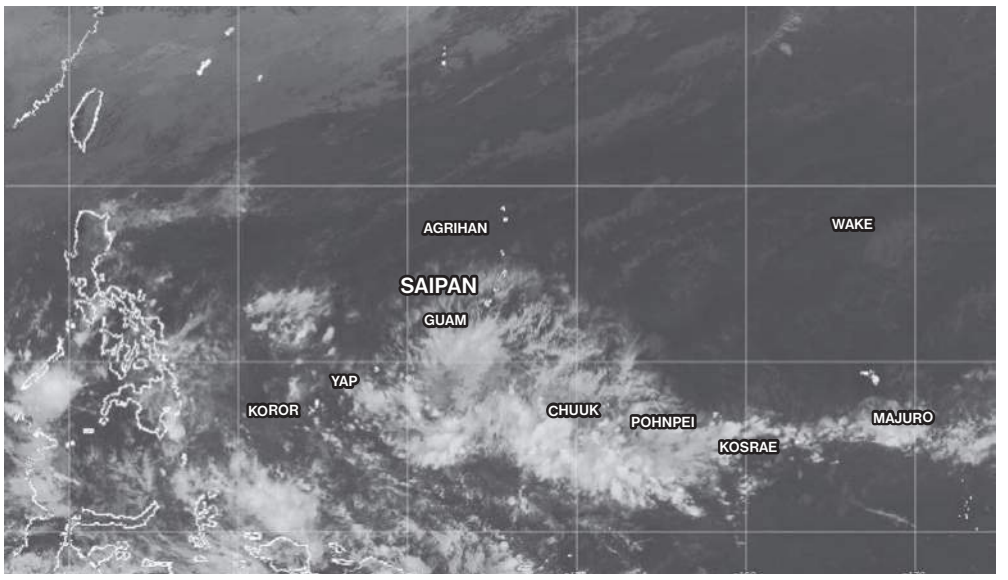
© 2020 *The Dallas Morning News*

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 12:58 PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A dry trade-wind pattern has maintained its grip across the area with showers ultimately staying well to the south. To the east, satellite imagery shows clusters of shallow trade-wind clouds, some of which contain showers, that will eventually cross through the Marianas, but rainfall amounts will be rather small as showers will be on the move.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Showers	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°
Pohnpei	Showers	86° / 79°
Kosrae	Showers	86° / 79°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:50 PM
Sunday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	7:55 AM	7:24 PM	-
Thursday	8:54 AM	8:25 PM	-
Friday	9:47 AM	9:23 PM	-
Saturday	10:35 AM	10:19 PM	-
Sunday	11:18 AM	11:10 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	72° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	39° / 19°
Hong Kong	Sunny	68° / 54°
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	79° / 69°
London	Partly Cloudy	43° / 39°
Los Angeles	Sunny	68° / 49°
Manila	Showers	86° / 75°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	86° / 63°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	79° / 72°
New York	Partly Cloudy	53° / 39°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	48° / 34°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43° / 37°
Busan	Sunny	43° / 28°
Rome	Sunny	50° / 30°
Salem	Showers	63° / 52°
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	54° / 47°
Seoul	Mixed	34° / 19°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	46° / 37°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	60° / 43°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:36 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.86
9:46 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.85
3:10 PM	LOW TIDE	1.09
7:51 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.83

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

MG Mall
changing retail shopping on Saipan

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
MG Mall president Jenny Cha wants customers to have a good shopping experience at MG Mall.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
MG Mall employees are ready to help in your shopping. From left, Lisa Li, MG Mall president Jenny Cha, MG Mall manager Sarah Lee, and Ruby Quan.

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

MG Mall located in San Antonio opened its doors last Dec. 1 to offer the community a different kind of shopping experience. According to MG Mall president Jenny Cha, who has an experience operating a large shopping mall in Korea, their focus and is to select good and quality items and sell them at low prices.

"Opening a retail business has been a desire of mine and one of the reasons why I opened a mall on Saipan is that the island doesn't have enough local shopping opportunities both offline and online…Over the years of living here, my observation is if a product is cheap, the quality is bad and if the quality is good, it's too expensive," she said.

"MG Mall wants to pursue is to have good items and distribute to customers at low prices… majority of the items that we have are useful and practical to everyday life," she added.

Currently, MG Mall carries home appliances, kitchen supplies, Bluetooth speakers, sporting goods, stuffed toys, different kinds of lights especially solar light, diffusers, various fashion items, and many more. "Customers can reach us by going to the store and to our online store… The biggest consideration is what do people on Saipan need? That's why we decided to provide items that are useful for people of whatever age and gender," Cha said.

"In terms of pricing, our items range from $1 to $200… most items available on Saipan are made in China and the quality is often poor. MG Mall will sell quality products from Korea and sell them to the people of Saipan as inexpensive as possible," Cha added.

Cha vows that customers will have a good shopping experience when they come to the mall. Aside from abiding to health and safety protocols set by the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, the mall is well lit, spacious, and aims to promote positive experience during and after shopping.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The newly opened MG Mall in San Antonio sells quality products from Korea and available at affordable prices.

"We have been living in the U.S for 20 years [now] and I know that every customer wants to be comfortable and items accessible… Since we have just started, we have products available in the store and still in the process of getting more and building inventory," she said.

"Our vision for MG Mall in the next two or three years is that the community will know and rely on us to supply cheap and good quality products," she added.

MG Mall is located along Afetna Beach Road (between Hopwood Middle School and Gold Ribbon). They are open every day from 9am to 8pm. Go to www.mgmall670.com for online shopping and delivery to Tinian and Guam via the U.S. Post Office. For more information, call (670) 235-0072 or visit their Facebook page.

California subpoenas Amazon over worker safety in pandemic

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra on Monday asked a judge to order Amazon to comply with subpoenas his office issued nearly four months ago as part of an investigation into how the company protects workers from the coronavirus.

Becerra said the online sales giant hasn't provided enough information on its safety steps and the status of infections and deaths at its shipping facilities across California. The attorney general is President-elect Joe Biden's pick to lead the Health and Human Services Department; he'd be the first Latino in the post.

"We're investigating because we got reports, information, complaints about conditions, incidents," Becerra said. "We believe that it merits looking into Amazon's protocols, practices, based on information that we have received."

The court filing from Becerra lists media reports about three Amazon workers' deaths but said the company mentioned none of them in its responses. It says he learned more about the company's infection rate from its blog posts than from its subpoena responses. ***(AP)***

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
ITB NO.: ITB21-DPW-024

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 19, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF FOURTEEN (14) DESKTOP COMPUTERS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS - SAIPAN"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY OF DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-005

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 19, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"ACHUGAO WATERSHED SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING, UPLAND REFORESTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO MR. ZACHARY WILLIAMS, VIA EMAIL TO zwilliams@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS JANUARY 05, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

Nation

US vaccinations ramp up as feds weigh 2nd COVID-19 shot

WASHINGTON (AP)—Hundreds more U.S. hospitals will begin vaccinating their workers Tuesday as federal health officials review a second COVID-19 shot needed to boost the nation's largest vaccination campaign.

Packed in dry ice to stay at ultra-frozen temperatures, shipments of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine are set to arrive at 400 additional hospitals and other distribution sites, one day after the nation's death toll surpassed a staggering 300,000. The first 3 million shots are being strictly rationed to front-line health workers and elder-care patients, with hundreds of millions more shots needed over the coming months to protect most Americans.

The Food and Drug Administration is set to publish its analysis of a second rigorously studied COVID-19 vaccine, which could soon join Pfizer-BioNTech's in the fight against the pandemic. If FDA advisers give it a positive recommendation on Thursday, the agency could greenlight the vaccine from drugmaker Moderna later this week.

A second vaccine can't come soon enough as the country's daily death count continues to top 2,400 amid over 210,000 new daily cases, based on weekly averages of data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. The devastating toll is only expected to grow in coming weeks, fueled by holiday travel, family gatherings and lax adherence to basic public health measures.

The first vaccine deliveries have provided a measure of encouragement to exhausted doctors, nurses and hospital staffers around the country.

AP

Colleen Teevan, System Pharmacy Clinical Manager at Hartford HealthCare, administers the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for COVID-19 to healthcare worker Connor Paleski outside of Hartford Hospital, Monday, Dec. 14, 2020, in Hartford, Conn.

Johnnie Peoples, a 43-year-old survival flight nurse, was excited and a little nervous Monday afternoon as he unzipped his flight suit and stuck out his left arm to become the first person to receive the vaccine at the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor.

"Just to be a part of it is a good feeling," he said.

Since March, he's transported critically ill COVID-19 patients by jet from smaller hospitals around the state to the university medical center. It's up-close-and-personal work that requires him to adjust ventilator settings and administer infusions to keep blood pressure from plummeting.

In Florida, government officials expect to have 100,000 doses of the vaccine by Tuesday at five hospitals across the state.

"This is 20,000 doses of hope," said John Couris, president and chief executive officer, Tampa General Hospital, after the delivery of 3,900 vaccine vials on Monday. Each vial has five doses.

Because the vaccine requires two rounds, the people getting injections now will need a second shot in about three weeks.

Vaccinations were also expected to kick off Tuesday in New Jersey, which is dividing some 76,000 doses among health workers and nursing home residents. The federal government is coordinating the massive delivery operation by private shipping and distribution companies based on locations chosen by state governors.

Following another initial set of deliveries Wednesday, officials with the Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed in Washington said they will begin moving 580 more shipments through the weekend.

"We're starting our drumbeat of continuous execution of vaccine as it is available," Army Gen. Gustave Perna, chief operating officer for Warp Speed, told reporters Monday. "We package and we deliver. It is a constant flow of available vaccine."

Shots for nursing home residents won't begin in most states until next Monday, when some 1,100 facilities are set to begin vaccinations.

Perna and other U.S. officials reiterated their projection that 20 million Americans will be able to get their first shots by the end of December, and 30 million more in January.

That projection assumes swift authorization of the vaccine up for review this week, co-developed by Moderna and the National Institutes of Health. Like the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, Moderna's requires two shots for full protection.

Democrats squeezed as COVID-19 relief talks continue

WASHINGTON (AP)—Top Washington negotiators continued to reach for a long-delayed agreement on COVID-19 relief on Monday, but rank-and-file Democrats appeared increasingly resigned to having to drop, for now, a scaled-back demand for fiscal relief for states and local governments whose budgets have been thrown out of balance by the pandemic.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., spoke with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin by phone Monday evening and continues to press for help for struggling states and localities. But top Democratic allies of President-elect Joe Biden came out in support of a $748 billion plan offered by a bipartisan group of lawmakers and hinted they won't insist on a pitched battle for state and local aid now.

"We cannot afford to wait any longer to act. This should not be Congress' last COVID relief bill, but it is a strong compromise that deserves support from both Republicans and Democrats in the Senate," said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del. "We cannot leave for the holidays without getting relief to those Americans who need it."

The message from Coons, a confidant of Biden, and a similar message from Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin, D-Ill., came as a bipartisan group of lawmakers unveiled a detailed COVID-19 aid proposal on Monday in hopes it would serve as a model for their battling leaders to follow as they try to negotiate a final agreement.

But the group was unable to forge a compromise on GOP-sought provisions shielding businesses from COVID-related lawsuits, a key priority of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. The Kentucky Republican is pressing a lowest-common-denominator approach that would drop the lawsuit shield idea for now if Democrats agree to drop a $160 billion state and local aid package.

Pelosi has insisted for months that state and local aid would be in any final bill, but as time is running out, Democrats appear unwilling to hold the rest of the package hostage over the demand. Several Democrats appeared at the bipartisan news conference endorsing the $748 billion package.

"I found it interesting that they separated out the state and local and liability provisions. Senator McConnell had suggested that earlier," said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas. "Seems to me that we're making some progress on it."

Cornyn, a McConnell lieutenant, spoke after a dozen or so lawmakers unveiled two bills. One is a $748 billion aid package containing money for struggling businesses, the unemployed, schools and vaccine distribution. There is also $45 billion for transportation and transit assistance, funding for rural internet service and help for the Postal Service, among other provisions. The other bill proposes a $160 billion aid package for state and local governments and a modified liability shield that is backed by Republicans and Democratic moderate Joe Manchin of West Virginia, but it is probably too politically freighted to advance.

Trump says Barr resigning, will leave before Christmas

WASHINGTON (AP)—Attorney General William Barr, one of President Donald Trump's staunchest allies, is departing amid lingering tension over the president's baseless claims of election fraud and the investigation into President-elect Joe Biden's son.

Barr went Monday to the White House, where Trump said the attorney general submitted his letter of resignation. "As per letter, Bill will be leaving just before Christmas to spend the holidays with his family," Trump tweeted.

Trump has publicly expressed his anger about Barr's statement to The Associated Press earlier this month that the Justice Department had found no widespread fraud that would change the outcome of the election. Trump has also been angry that the Justice Department did not publicly announce it was investigating Hunter Biden ahead of the election, despite department policy against such a pronouncement.

Barr told the AP that U.S. attorneys and FBI agents have been working to follow up specific complaints and information they've received, but "to date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election."

Barr's resignation leaves Trump without a critical ally as he winds down his final weeks in office, and it throws into question open Justice Department investigations, especially the probe into Hunter Biden's taxes.

In his resignation letter, Barr said he updated Trump Monday on the department's "review of voter fraud allegations in the 2020 election and how these allegations will continue to be pursued." He added that his last day on the job would be Dec. 23.

Trump said Deputy Attorney General Jeff Rosen, whom he labeled "an outstanding person," will become acting attorney general. As the current second in command at the Justice Department, Rosen's appointment is not likely to change much in the final weeks before the administration departs.

Trump spent much of the day watching the Electoral College tally and calling allies but broke away to meet with Barr. His tweet about the Attorney General's exit was a sober message from a president who is notoriously cold to his departing staff and quick to name-call and deride them once they say they are leaving.

Trump has also has previously claimed he fired staffers who resigned to make himself appear more powerful, and others, like former attorney general Jeff Sessions, were mocked by the president for weeks before they left office.

Asia

South Korea to open more virus test sites

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea was opening dozens of free COVID-19 testing sites in the greater Seoul area, as the country registered additional 718 new cases Monday amid a surge in infections.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said the additional cases took the country's total since the pandemic began to 43,484 infections with 587 deaths. It said about 65% of the new cases were found in the Seoul area, which has been at the center of a recent viral resurgence.

The additional cases were a drop from the 1,030 cases reported a day earlier, the highest daily increase since South Korea confirmed its first patient in January. Observers say the lower figures for Monday are a result of fewer tests taken over the weekend and that the country's caseload is expected to surge again this week.

Starting from Monday, health authorities are to open 150 virus testing centers in the Seoul area in phases. That's in addition to more than 210 existing test sites.

At the new sites scheduled to run for three weeks, anyone can visit and take free tests. Previously, people wanting to take diagnostic tests on their own have had to pay if they tested negative.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

■ New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said her country plans to open a travel bubble with Australia some time in the first quarter of 2021. That would mean people traveling from Australia to New Zealand would no longer need to go into quarantine for two weeks upon arrival. For its part, Australia is already letting New Zealanders skip quarantine. The announcement Monday comes two days after New Zealand said it planned a similar bubble with the Cook Islands. The two arrangements would represent the first travel bubbles that New Zealand has agreed to since closing its borders when the coronavirus first hit earlier this year. New Zealand has moved cautiously on restarting international travel after stamping out community spread of the virus. Ardern said there are some remaining logistical issues to overcome, including how it would deal with a large influx of returning travelers in the case of another significant outbreak in Australia. The announcement comes as some relief to families separated by the virus and to tourism operators, many of whom rely on visitors from Australia.

S. Korea bans flying of leaflets toward N. Korea by balloon

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's parliament on Monday approved contentious legislation criminalizing the flying of propaganda leaflets by balloon toward North Korea, despite fierce criticism that the country is sacrificing freedom of expression to improve ties with the rival North.

The legislation passed with the support of 187 lawmakers, mostly governing party members who support President Moon Jae-in's policy of engagement with North Korea. Outnumbered opposition lawmakers didn't attend the vote after their attempt at delaying the balloting with nonstop speeches was foiled by governing party lawmakers and their allies who used their three-fifths supermajority to halt the speeches in a separate vote.

It was the first time that South Korea's parliament has passed a bill formally banning civilians from floating anti-North Korea leaflets across the tense border. South Korea has previously banned such activities only during sensitive times, and has normally allowed activists to exercise their freedom of speech despite repeated protests from North Korea.

Activists and defectors from North Korea have for years used huge helium-filled balloons to carry leaflets criticizing North Korea's nuclear weapons program and human rights record, USB sticks with information about world news, and U.S. dollars. Observers say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un likely saw the leafleting as a threat to his absolute rule over his 25 million people, who mostly have little access to outside information.

Lawmakers aligned with Moon say the legislation is intended to avoid unnecessarily provoking North Korea, to ensure the safety of people who live near the border, and to secure stable relations with the North. Opponents accuse Moon of sympathizing excessively with North Korea or yielding to North Korean threats over the leafleting.

"This is a law that will block the flow of South Korea's great values, the spirit of democracy, freedom and equality, to North Korea," conservative opposition lawmaker Tae Yongho said during a 10-hour speech. "It's a law aimed at joining hands with Kim Jong Un and leaving North Korean residents enslaved for good."

Tae was a senior North Korean diplomat in London before defecting to South Korea in 2016 and was elected to South Korea's parliament in April.

The bill will take effect three months after being promulgated by the government, which is regarded as a formality. A lawyers' group in Seoul earlier said it would file a constitutional appeal if the bill is passed.

Under the legislation, anyone flying leaflets, auxiliary storage devices or money toward North Korea without government permission can be punished by up to three years in prison or a fine of 30 million won ($27,730). The same penalty can also be applied to blaring loudspeaker broadcasts or placement of giant billboards at border areas, but no civilians in South Korea are known to have been involved in such activities.

Moon and Kim agreed to halt Cold War-style psychological warfare and lower animosities when they met in April 2018 at the start of now-stalled global diplomacy on North Korea's nuclear program. Moon's government says that agreement must be applied to civilian leafleting, but opponents argue the accord didn't clearly prohibit it.

The bill's passage came six months after Kim's powerful sister, Kim Yo Jong, responded furiously over what she called South Korea's inability to halt civilian leafleting and demanded it ban the activity. She called North Korean defectors involved in the leafleting campaign "human scum" and "mongrel dogs."

Moon's government responded that it would introduce an anti-leafleting law and press charges against some activists. But an angry North Korea went ahead with a threat to blow up an unoccupied South Korean-built liaison office on its territory, in its most significant provocation in more than two years.

World

London faces tightest restrictions

LONDON (AP)—London and its surrounding areas will be placed under Britain's highest level of coronavirus restrictions beginning Wednesday as infections rise rapidly in the capital, the health secretary said Monday, adding that a new variant of the virus may be to blame for the spread.

AP

Police officers wear face masks as they patrol an anti-lockdown demonstration in Parliament Square, in London, Monday, Dec. 14, 2020.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the government must take swift action after seeing "very sharp, exponential rises" in Greater London and nearby Kent and Essex. He said in some areas cases are doubling every seven days.

The surge of COVID-19 cases in southern England may be associated with a new variant of coronavirus, Hancock told lawmakers. He said officials are assessing the new strand, but stressed there was nothing to suggest it was more likely to cause serious disease, or that it wouldn't respond to a vaccine.

» Sees new virus variant

"We've currently identified over 1,000 cases with this variant predominantly in the south of England, although cases have been identified in nearly 60 different local authority areas," he said. Initial analysis suggests that the new variant is growing faster than existing variants, he added.

"The medical advice that we have is that it is highly unlikely that this new variant will impinge the vaccine and the impact of the vaccine," he said.

Britain started vaccinating people over age 80 and health care workers on Dec. 8 with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and its regulators are also evaluating other vaccines, including one developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University. Thousands have been vaccinated so far, but they must return in 21 days for a second shot. The National Health Service said hundreds of medical clinics across England were getting vaccine deliveries on Monday and would be offering shots by Tuesday.

Under Tier 3 restrictions, the toughest level in England's three-tier system, people can't socialize indoors, and bars, pubs and restaurants must close except for takeout. People are told to minimize traveling within or to the area, and Hancock said people shouldn't take trips into central London to do Christmas shopping.

London is currently in Tier 2, or high alert, which applies to most of England.

In November, the capital was among the areas with the lowest regional infection rates in England but some areas in and around London have now become virus hot spots.

Dr. Michael Ryan, the chief of emergencies for the World Health Organization, said the U.N. health agency was aware of the new strain reported in the U.K. and was working with British and other health authorities to assess if the reported mutations might change how the virus is behaving.

"This kind of evolution and mutations like this are quite common," Ryan told reporters on Monday, adding there was "no information that suggests" this virus variant is more deadly or spreads more easily between people.

1 dead, dozens wounded in tribal clashes in southern Tunisia

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP)—Tunisian authorities ordered a curfew in regions in southern Tunisia after at least a man was killed and dozens of people wounded, two seriously, in tribal clashes that broke out over a land dispute.

According to the official TAP news agency, the curfew from 4 p.m. to 5 a. m., starting on Monday, was decided by governors of Medenine and Kebili to prevent further violence.

The inhabitants were fighting over the ownership of an area called Aïn Sekhouna, which is located between the two and boasts a hot spring in the middle of the desert. The governorates of Medenine and Kebili are close to the Libyan and Algerian borders.

According to the official TAP news agency, security forces backed by military units used tear gas to disperse those involved, many of whom were armed with sticks and shotguns.

The security forces union reported 83 wounded who were transferred to nearby hospitals using ambulances from surrounding areas. TAP reported that four security officers were injured in the clashes and a security vehicle ransacked.

Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi gave instructions to the ministers of the interior and of defense to hold a crisis meeting in the hope of finding a solution to the dispute "by legal means."

Tunisian President Kais Saied traveled by helicopter to the disputed area. He urged residents to make reason prevail over violence and warned against internal threats to the Tunisian state, without providing details.

Meanwhile, Mechichi, on a visit to France on Monday, said he agreed with French Prime Minister Jean Castex on the need for a greater cooperation between the two countries on migrant issues, especially through development and investment policies in Tunisian regions where people entering illegally into Europe come from, according to TAP.

France said the visit comes out of solidarity between the two countries following an Oct. 29 Islamic extremist knife attack that killed three people in a Nice church. The chief suspect is a Tunisian man who illegally entered into Italy and then traveled to France.

Mechichi, who is on his first trip abroad since he took office on Sept. 2, is scheduled to visit Italy on Tuesday.

Good Housekeeping

We only have to do this once. How to celebrate the holidays alone

By JESSICA ROY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Many of us are about to spend the holidays the same way we spent most of 2020: at home.

If you're one of the people planning to hit the road for Thanksgiving travel, the CDC is asking you to reconsider. L.A. County reported more than 5,000 new coronavirus cases on Thursday, shattering the previous record. The state is imposing a limited curfew. Most of California is back in the purple tier.

In the interest of forgoing this holiday season together in order to ensure many more with our extended families, let's focus on the good news. Though it might be hard to believe right now, as things get so grim, the promising vaccine developments suggest the proverbial tunnel finally has a light at the end of it. We just need to hang in there a little longer.

You'll likely be able to plan a spectacular family feast for Easter 2021, said Paula Cannon, a virologist and professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the Keck School of Medicine at USC. (For calendar-marking purposes, that's April 4.)

"Come Easter, you can have two turkeys. You can make up for it," she said. For now, "I think there is no greater way to show your gratitude and give thanks for your family than to forgo the usual family get-together this year."

In other words: We only have to do this once.

So let's make the most of it and celebrate everything that makes the holidays special without putting anyone else at risk.

EMBRACE IT AS SELF-CARE

This won't be the first time for Jacy Topps, a freelance writer who's written about why she chooses to celebrate the holidays alone. It started when she moved to New York City and couldn't afford a ticket home, but she discovered she enjoyed making new traditions on her own, like watching all the "Harry Potter" movies on TV while drinking homemade butterbeer.

After she got married she spent the first few holidays with her in-laws, but this year, she said she's opting out. Her wife's family holds different political views, and she said that although a part of her wishes she could see them and gloat, it's more important to her to take this time for herself.

Indulging your own wants and needs over fulfilling a duty to be with family (for a potentially contentious gathering) is a radical act of self-care, particularly as a Black woman, she said.

"There is that stigma that you have to spend (the holidays) with people even though you don't want to see these people or travel or hang out with them or do their traditions. It's more of a societal pressure," she said. "Sometimes you have obligations, and that's fine, and you do those some years, but some years it's OK to treat yourself and do what makes you happy. Your obligation is to yourself."

She and her wife are going all-out this year, at home. An extensive menu has been brainstormed and wine-paired for Thanksgiving dinner. The tree has been trimmed — earlier in the season than usual, like a lot of us this year. A full day of movie viewing is in the works.

"Whatever brings you joy, just find it," Topps said.

TNS
We only have to do this once. How to celebrate the holidays alone.

RE-CREATE RITUALS

An expert on holiday rituals echoes that assessment. Ovul Sezer, an assistant professor of organizational behavior at the University of North Carolina, led a study about how participating in rituals and traditions affects enjoyment of the holiday season.

The verdict: "Family rituals improve the holidays," Sezer said, and add to overall holiday enjoyment.

And they didn't just look at religious rituals. Things like having a board game night or opening gifts at the same time or eating a traditional family recipe all contributed in the same way. These are all things we can try to recreate with the power of phone and video call technology.

So while it might be tempting to skip doing anything holiday-related altogether — to pretend we are merely in late, late, late, late March of 2020 — it's worth doing.

If you are someone with Zoom-savvy friends and family, I went over ideas for staying connected during the holidays starting around the 27-minute mark in The Times' We Can Teach You That event.

A few ideas to get you started:

■ Have everyone buy the same holiday craft supplies, puzzle or Lego set and do them together at the same time.

■ Send out a family recipe and cook it together.

■ Open a video call and decorate your houses at the same time (a virtual form of parallel socializing).

■ YouTube karaoke with holiday songs.

■ Plan a virtual game night with online versions of the board games you usually play together at home.

It might seem like trying to recreate things would make it all worse, amplifying how different it really is. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Brigham Young University, said America was already in a loneliness epidemic even before the pandemic set in. We don't have a lot of good data yet as to whether getting together on a video call alleviates loneliness, she said. It might come down to personal preference and whether people are comfortable using the technology.

Offline, another critical aspect of alleviating loneliness is increasing the quality of the face-to-face interactions that you are able to have, Holt-Lunstad said. When you have downtime with the people you live with or your pod, don't spend it all looking at screens. Engaging in hands-on activities together and having real conversations will make you feel more connected to one another than scrolling Twitter simultaneously.

MAKE A HOLIDAY BUCKET LIST

MaCenna Lee, whose YouTube channel "XO, MaCenna" has more than 600,000 subscribers, describes herself as "very much a Christmas person." Already, you can watch her video where she puts up Christmas decorations in her mid-Wilshire apartment.

"I'm having it big this year. If I can't do anything else, I'm going to enjoy everything that holiday decorating brings," she said. Her goal is to "inspire people to welcome in the holiday season indoors and make sure they're spending time enjoying traditions and keeping up their traditions and not letting them dissipate because they're not able to see family."

Her plan for the rest of the season: a "holiday bucket list," where she writes down all the things she loves doing during this time of year and crosses something off it every day. Some of the activities she has planned include making hot cocoa, creating DIY gifts to send to family and Christmas decorating.

Another thing to add to your list: practice gratitude. Holt-Lunstad said research shows that expressions of gratitude are associated with increased social bonding and reductions of loneliness. Telling people you appreciate them makes both of you feel better, whether it's going around on a Thanksgiving video call to say what you're grateful for this year or leaving a note for your neighbor saying thank you for letting you borrow a roll of toilet paper.

And be grateful for the things you can still do while taking pandemic precautions. Cannon, the USC virologist, said her backyard is permanently set up for COVID-safe gatherings: two tables, spaced 20 feet apart.

"There's really nothing you can do that's as safe as moving a party outdoors," she said.

We're lucky to live in Southern California, where the weather will stay reasonable through winter, though not exactly toasty, especially if you're out past sunset. She just made a critical California-winter investment: patio heaters.

5 simple and inexpensive Christmas decorating tips from Netflix's Mr. Christmas

By ERIN JENSEN
USA TODAY

Dec. 10—Amid a pandemic, some have had to tighten their belts. Others, abiding by social distancing guidelines, may be celebrating Christmas at home for the first time, or for the first time in a very long time. But that doesn't mean all holly jolly is lost.

Enter Benjamin Bradley, the star of Netflix's "Holiday Home Makeover with Mr. Christmas", which debuted in November. Over four episodes filmed in 2019, Bradley, aka Mr. Christmas, comes to the rescue of families with decorating dilemmas. Some of his tips involve simple crafts made from inexpensive items, like homemade ornaments and decor made from peppermints.

Now, as we enter the thick of the Christmas season, he's sharing more insight and ideas with USA TODAY. Read on Dasher, Dancer, Prudent, Vixen, Comet, Frugal, Donner and Blitzen for budget-friendly decorating ideas.

1. Don't try to decorate every nook and cranny

Hone in on just a couple of areas of your home and don't attempt to touch everything with the Christmas spirit, suggests Bradley.

"It doesn't have to be a Hallmark movie come to life," he assures. One area of focus should be the Christmas tree, he says. Another could be a book case, mantel or kitchen counter.

"Just do things a little bit in abundance in those two places," he advises.

A similar approach can be taken with the food and beverages served. "Pick one cocktail," Bradley says, offering an example of champagne with a splash of pomegranate as a festive option.

2. Reimagine the decorations you already own

Do you see what I see? Yes, a new use for that garland and 'Noel' sign.

"This year in particular, don't go out and spend money on new things," says Bradley. He suggests taking stock of what you have already own by pulling it out for review. Then assess what you have and think creatively about where else it could might go, resulting in a fresh look.

Another tip is to make every day items more festive. Add a bow or ribbon to candle holders, or wrap already hanging pictures in seasonal gift wrap as a cost-effective solution for wall art.

3. Statement pieces don't have to be expensive

Bradley points out dollar stores are great to find ornaments, artificial flowers and candy canes.

"There's nothing that's more iconic and says Christmas more than a candy cane," he says. Pile them high in glass jars adorned with holly, he suggests. Have a pretty bowl or basket lying around? Fill it with red ornaments and greens sprigs to "make a wonderful statement."

Also, peppermints can be hot glued to each other to make an inexpensive garland. And, white carnations and cranberries picked up from the local grocery store can create a wintry centerpiece.

4. Oh what fun it is to DIY

Ornaments can be made at home for the tree or as an option for affordable gifts. Bradley mentions a dough made from cinnamon and apple sauce, which can be rolled out and shaped using cookie cutters.

"It's beautifully scented, so you get a beautiful decoration, as well as the scent of the holidays," he says.

On "Holiday Home Makeover with Mr. Christmas," Bradley instructs on how to make a salt dough ornament, which can be used to preserve hand or paw prints for many Christmases to come.

5. Go foraging in a winter wonderland

Your surroundings may offer decor on the cheap. Bradley suggests visiting local tree lots and asking for the discarded bottoms of trees.

"Most places will give those to you for free," he says. They can be transformed into garlands and wreaths.

Bradley, a lover of pine cones, scoops them up in Central Park and incorporates them into designs such as embellishing garland. Pine cones can also fill a bowl or be made into ornaments. Just be sure to de-critter them. "You can just stick those in your oven for like 2 hours at 200 degrees, and it debugs them," he shares.

Life & Style

WARNER BROS.-LIBRARY OF CONGRESS VIA AP
This image released by the Library of Congress shows Heath Ledger, left, and Christian Bale in a scene from the 2008 film "The Dark Knight." The film was added to the National Film Registry.

'Dark Knight,' 'Grease' added to National Film Registry

LOS ANGELES (AP)—This year's inductees into the National Film Registry include a record number of female directors and filmmakers of color as well as a new crop of movies ranging from a silent short film thriller, classic musicals and an acclaimed Batman film.

The Library of Congress announced Monday that films including "The Dark Knight," "Suspense," musicals "Grease" and "The Blues Brothers" along with Sidney Poitier's Oscar-winning performance in "Lilies of the Field" are among the 25 movies tapped for preservation this year.

The national library said this year's selections include a record nine films directed by women and filmmakers of color.

"With the inclusion of diverse filmmakers, we are not trying to set records but rather to set the record straight by spotlighting the astonishing contributions women and people of color have made to American cinema, despite facing often-overwhelming hurdles," Carla Hayden, the Librarian of Congress, said in a statement.

Hayden and film historian Jacqueline Stewart will discuss the new selections in a television special on Turner Classic Movies on Tuesday at 8 p.m. EST.

The library has selected movies for preservation because of their cultural, historic and artist importance since the registry began in 1988. This year's picks bring the total number of films in the registry to 800.

Music was featured in this year's selection including the film adaptation of Broadway musicals "Cabin in the Sky" in 1943 and "Grease," which starred John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John in 1978.

"The Blue Brothers" director John Landis called the film's selection into the registry a "delightful surprise."

"The film is the result of Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi's genuine passion for rhythm and blues and our mutual love for these great African American artists and the city of Chicago," said Landis, who has two projects in the registry including "Animal House" and Michael Jackson's "Thriller."

The library chose a few more memorable titles such as Kathryn Bigelow's "The Hurt Locker," the animated film "Shrek" and "The Joy Luck Club," a movie based on Amy Tan's bestselling book that told the saga of two generations of Asian American women. The 2010 documentary "Freedom Riders," also making its way into the registry, told an inspiring story about civil rights activists who fought against racial segregation on buses and trains in the 1960s.

Christopher Nolan's 2008 Batman film "The Dark Knight" was a blockbuster and the top public vote-getter.

The other films directed by women include Lois Weber's "Suspense," Ida May Park's "Bread," Aloha Wanderwell's "With Car and Camera Around the World," Ida Lupino's "Outrage," Kathleen Collins' "Losing Ground," Julie Dash's "Illusions," Lourdes Portillo's "The Devil Never Sleeps" and "Mauna Kea: Temple Under Siege" by Joan Lander.

Appeals court sends 'Leaving Neverland' fight to arbitration

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—A federal appeals court ruled Monday that a lawsuit filed by the Michael Jackson estate over an HBO documentary about two of the late pop star's sex abuse accusers can go forward in private arbitration.

A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with two lower courts and ruled in favor of the Jackson estate in its decision on "Leaving Neverland."

Unless there are further appeals, the case will go to a private arbitrator, which the Jackson estate argued was required by the 1992 contract at the center of the lawsuit.

That means the proceedings will be largely shielded from public view, though Jackson attorneys said in court filings that they would like for them to be as open as possible and sought private arbitration because it was the only way available to sue under the contract.

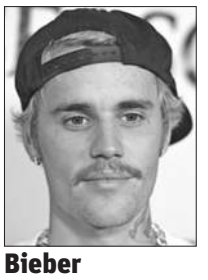
The decades-old agreement to put a Jackson concert on HBO required that the cable channel not disparage Jackson, which the lawsuit says it did by airing the molestation allegations of Wade Robson and James Safechuck in "Leaving Neverland."

"In the court's own words, HBO 'agreed that it would not make any disparaging remarks concerning Jackson,'" estate attorneys Howard Weitzman and Jonathan Steinsapir said in a statement. "It's time for HBO to answer for its violation of its obligations to Michael Jackson."

Justin Bieber, UK health workers team up for charity song

LONDON (AP)—Justin Bieber has teamed up with a choir of London medical staff to record a special charity Christmas single.

The choir, made up of nurses, doctors and other health care staff working in the British capital's Lewisham and Greenwich public health service, joined the Canadian pop star for a special version of his song "Holy" in a bid to top the Christmas chart.



Bieber

Choir members recorded their vocals at London's famous Abbey Road Studios. Profits from the collaboration will go to National Health Service charities.

The choir gained fame when it vied with Bieber in 2015 for the Christmas No. 1 song. Bieber urged his millions of fans on Twitter to support the choir, not him, and it eventually won the top spot on the singles chart. The star then travelled to London and presented them with their charity award.

"It's great to be reunited with the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS choir, as we share a fun bit of U.K. chart history together," said Bieber, 26. "Especially in these difficult times, I'm humbled to team up with them for a charity single that will benefit NHS workers on the frontlines of this pandemic and pay tribute to their unbelievable dedication."

Living with ex-husband goes from bad to worse

DEAR ABBY: Although I have been divorced from my ex for eight years, we still live together. There is not—nor will there ever be—more than a platonic relationship between us, and I have made that abundantly clear to him.

It wasn't always a bad situation, but now it's worse than I could have ever imagined it would be. He drinks heavily on a daily basis and becomes verbally abusive. He has a woman over a lot, and I can't sleep when she's here.

She's a drunk, too, and she also abuses her prescription medications. At least half the time when she's here, I have to lift her passed-out body off the floor and drag her off to his bedroom. She steals money, cigarettes, food and booze all the time.

He dismisses me when I bring up her behavior. He tells me to shut up or get out. I pay for everything except the rent and homeowner's insurance. Cable, electric, oil, propane and groceries are my responsibility. I also do all the inside and outside chores. I earn less than he does, but I pay more than he does.

He tells me what to eat and who I can talk to. I can't have company. Yet he wants to know why I'm not dating. I can't save any money so I can get out. I'm stuck, and he knows it. What do I do?

HORRIBLE SITUATION IN MAINE

DEAR HORRIBLE SITUATION: You owe this man nothing. You are being treated like a serf, and it has been going on far too long. If you have family or friends you can stay with until you save enough for a place of your own, start asking now. That should enable you to save more money because you won't be paying for cable, electricity, propane, etc. for your ex.

P.S. When the girlfriend passes out, do not lift or drag her anywhere. That is your ex's privilege and not your responsibility. With the load you're already carrying, the last thing you need is a strained back.

DEAR ABBY: I am at high risk for COVID. My oldest son and his family live an hour and a half away. They have two children at home. Their daughter is also at high risk.

During this pandemic, they have continually posted photos of themselves and the kids maskless with friends, hugging each other and acting as if life is normal. My daughter-in-law has told me she's "scared" and does the "wear a mask" thing and shares routine online posts, etc., yet she continues having people over.

In normal circumstances, it's difficult for me to visit. I want to visit them, but every time I consider it, I see them on social media with someone else, sans mask and no social distancing. I'm sure they would say their friends are all healthy, but none of us can know for certain who their friends have been around. It's like dominoes, and it's scary.

I don't know how to explain this to them because I know they will feel I'm being ridiculous. Also, my DIL is super sensitive and would be hurt and insulted. I love them. I don't want to alienate them. I'm ready to just take my chances, although my other daughter is against it. What should I do?

CAUTIOUS IN NEW YORK

DEAR CAUTIOUS: Many people have grown complacent about mask wearing and social distancing. That's unfortunate because, as I write this, "mask fatigue" has led to an increase in the number of people testing positive for the virus. Your concerns are valid, and I hope you will stick to your guns. As a member of a high-risk group, your life could depend on it.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

DEAR ABBY

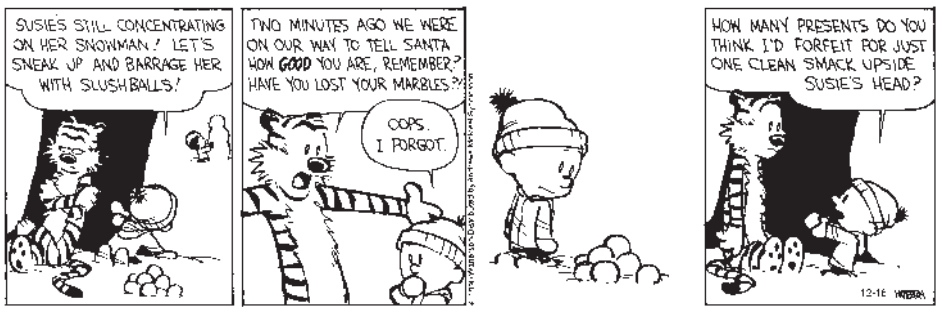
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


SUSIE'S STILL CONCENTRATING ON HER SNOWMAN! LET'S SNEAK UP AND BARRAGE HER WITH SLUSHBALLS!
TWO MINUTES AGO WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO TELL SANTA HOW GOOD YOU ARE, REMEMBER? HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MARBLES?
OOPS. I FORGOT.
HOW MANY PRESENTS DO YOU THINK I'D FORFEIT FOR JUST ONE CLEAN SMACK UPSIDE SUSIE'S HEAD?
12-16

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Dear Santa, I would like a personal chef for Christmas.
TIC TIC TIC
An Italian, who can make a killer lasagna.
TIC TIC TIC TIC
HEY, IF YOU DON'T ASK, YOU WON'T GET!
JIM DAVIS 12-16

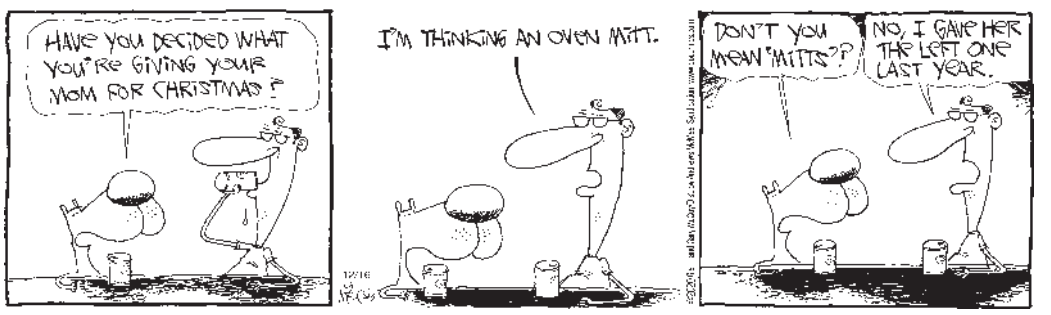
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

NICE COSTUME.
IT'S NOT A COSTUME!
I SOMEHOW BECAME AN ELF IN MY SLEEP!
I'M CRAVING SUGAR-PLUMS AND DYING TO SING AND MAKE TOYS AND STUFF!
WHAT IS A SUGARPLUM, ANYWAY?
NO IDEA! BUT MAN, DO I HAVE A HANKERING!
12-16

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


HAVE YOU DECIDED WHAT YOU'RE GIVING YOUR MOM FOR CHRISTMAS?
I'M THINKING AN OVEN MITT.
DON'T YOU MEAN "MITTS"?
NO, I GAVE HER THE LEFT ONE LAST YEAR.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Barking critter
5 English channel?
8 Taj Mahal city
12 "To Live and Die —"
13 Actor Stephen
14 60 minutes
15 Fitness footwear
17 Noble Italian family
18 Waste maker
19 Christie of mysteries
21 Harp's cousin
24 Poem of praise
25 Like custard
28 Texter's "As I see it"
30 Alphabet starter
33 Old Oldsmobile
34 Small songbird
35 "Gee, ya think?"
36 — -mo
37 Exploits
38 "Auld Lang —"
39 Society newbie
41 Answer an invite
43 Op-ed pieces
46 They hang around the house?
50 Scrooge's cries
51 Multipart presents
54 Skin soother
55 Ring decision
56 Intend
57 Evergreen trees
58 Gender
59 Bygone fliers

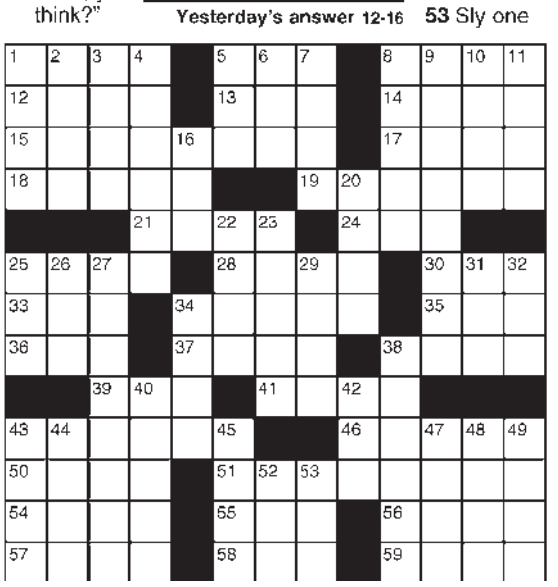
DOWN

1 Unuttered "alas"
2 New Age singer
3 Charitable gift
4 In conclusion
5 Buddy
6 Spell-off
7 Juan's home
8 Winning
9 Date exclusively
10 Old Testament book
11 Geometric calculation
16 "Psst!"
20 Thug
22 Ocho —, Jamaica
23 Glowing coal
25 Hosp. areas
26 Solidify
27 "Well done!"
29 Radiator sound
31 Chignon
32 "Evita" narrator
34 July's stone
38 Twitches
40 Relaxes
42 Animal doc
43 Online auction site
44 Red-tag event
45 USMC ranks
47 Geese formations
48 Coup d' —
49 Taxpayer IDs
52 Presidential nickname
53 Sly one

Solution time: 23 mins.

V	A	M	P		G	A	S		J	A	D	E
O	R	A	L		U	N	C		O	R	E	L
W	I	R	E	H	A	I	R		H	A	L	L
			D	O	C		U	S	A	B	L	E
B	U	D	G	E	T		B	O	N			
O	G	E	E		D	E	B	O	N	A	I	R
O		E		S	I	R	E	N		S	U	
S	I	N	C	L	A	I	R		M	I	L	E
			R	O	M	E		O	A	T	E	S
F	O	R	A	G	E		B	R	A			
E	N	I	D		T	V	R	E	P	A	I	R
E	C	O	L		E	P	A		L	I	O	N
T	F	T	F		R	S	T		F	M	U	S

Yesterday's answer 12-16



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hallee Hirsh, 33; Benjamin Bratt, 57; Sam Robards, 59; Billy Gibbons, 71.

Happy Birthday: Make health and well-being your priorities this year. Strive to be fit, eat nutritiously and eliminate stress. It's time to let go of old habits and people who tempt you or lead you astray. Look to the future with hope, enthusiasm and the desire to be and do your very best. Added discipline will encourage greater stability and security. Your numbers are 7, 15, 22, 24, 31, 39, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* What you want to do and what you are supposed to do will cause an internal conflict. Stop stressing and start working. Take physical action to get your responsibilities out of the way early, and move on to more enjoyable tasks. Romance is favored. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Focus on success, and you will be happy with the results you get. Invest more time, effort and money in learning, honing your skills and making your dreams come true. Embrace change and look for new opportunities. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Talk matters through, and you will get good results. A partnership looks promising, but it will require honesty right from day one. Fess up to anything that has the potential to become a problem. Question any information offered that sounds embellished. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* A financial change will take you by surprise. Protect against anyone asking personal questions or wanting access to sensitive information. A partnership will take an exciting turn based on the way someone reacts to a change you make. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* You will thrive in settings that require physical endurance and competition. Be honest with yourself regarding what you can do, and plan your strategy to fit your ability. Worry less about the changes others make and more about your goal. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Refuse to let personal problems drag you down. Getting ahead will depend on how much you are willing to put in to reach your goal. Strive for perfection, be articulate and embrace new possibilities and alternative options. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Listen to your heart, fulfill your dreams and let go of what is no longer working for you. Problems at home will leave you feeling torn between what you want and how to go about getting your way. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Just do it. Stop laboring over what's holding you back, put your ducks in a row and make a move. You know what's best for you and what you have to do to reach your objective. Daydream less; more initiative is required. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Be careful when dealing with joint ventures or shared expenses. Keeping things equal will help you avoid tension and get things done on time. Lay down a plan and a schedule that are within reason, and do your part. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Keep busy and keep the peace. Channel your energy into something concrete. What you accomplish will be directly linked to maintaining composure and not letting outside influences get to you. Be smart and goal-oriented, and success will come your way. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Keep an open mind and listen to what others say, but don't let anyone meddle in your affairs. Take a proactive approach to uphold your beliefs and help a cause that matters to you, and you will feel good about your accomplishments. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Look at your objective and map out a realistic, affordable plan. Don't let a last-minute change someone makes lead to uncertainty. Consider what's best for you and head in that direction. Be upfront about your intentions, and proceed with confidence. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are friendly, proactive and helpful. You are expressive and persistent.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn. Copyright 2020 Andrews McMeel Syndication

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		7				6		
8			5		6			7
	9		7	8	2		5	
		5				8		
7		3				2		5
	2	4				1	7	
		8				9		
	3		2	9	8		6	
	4						1	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/16

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	1	6	9	8	2	4	7	3
7	3	4	5	6	1	8	2	9
2	8	9	4	3	7	1	6	5
1	9	8	7	4	5	6	3	2
6	2	3	1	9	8	5	4	7
4	5	7	6	2	3	9	1	8
9	4	5	2	7	6	3	8	1
3	7	1	8	5	4	2	9	6
8	6	2	3	1	9	7	5	4

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

EDDIE VAN HALEN (1955-2020) **Solution: 8 letters**

T	O	U	R	S	K	J	I	W	E	D	O	L	V	D
N	A	Y	N	O	C	I	O	H	A	M	A	N	A	P
E	S	E	G	N	E	L	A	H	N	A	V	V	L	M
T	D	T	R	R	F	L	E	V	I	L	I	J	E	U
H	D	W	R	G	E	E	A	E	O	D	A	N	R	J
E	O	N	A	E	M	N	C	V	L	N	O	L	I	R
R	O	N	L	R	E	I	E	E	I	T	N	E	E	E
L	G	M	E	I	D	T	E	E	S	R	W	V	D	H
A	S	U	X	G	N	R	U	R	Z	R	O	R	O	C
N	M	B	I	H	O	E	G	U	E	V	Ⓓ	A	H	A
D	A	L	M	T	B	B	E	P	W	O	Ⓝ	H	A	E
S	E	A	H	N	A	C	N	T	S	I	Ⓐ	C	G	T
K	R	K	N	O	M	R	I	I	K	C	Ⓑ	O	A	O
K	D	R	O	W	D	Y	A	O	I	E	L	O	R	T
P	L	A	Y	N	O	H	T	N	A	S	O	L	O	O

© 2020 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 12/16

Album, Alex, Anthony, Band, Bertinelli, Bond, Charvel, Cool, David Lee Roth, Dice, Down, Dreams, Edward, Energy, Eruption, Eugenia, Good, Great, Guitar, Hagar, Icon, Janie, Jump, Liszewski, Live, Lodewijk, Love, Mark, Mean, Monk, Netherlands, Panama, Play, Right Now, Role, Rowdy, Solo, Stone, Street, Teacher, Toto, Tours, Valerie, Van Halen, Voice, Wolfgang

Yesterday's Answer: Gossip

Treasuries 24 through 42 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Rockets want Simmons, 3 top picks for Harden

HOUSTON — James Harden isn't going to come cheap.

The Rockets' current asking price, though, is apparently quite lofty.

If Houston wants three first-round picks along with Simmons and the Sixers aren't willing to part with the two-time All-Star in the first place, a Sixers deal for Harden doesn't appear especially close.

Of course, the Sixers aren't the only team with interest in Harden. Houston has talked with Harden's "two primary preferred trade destinations," which are the Nets and Sixers.

The Rockets are "uninterested in a package primarily composed of the Nets' complementary players and draft picks" and Brooklyn doesn't plan on dealing away Kyrie Irving, which means the teams would "need to find a more palatable young player on a third team as part of a broader deal."

For the Sixers, there's obviously no need to rush into a trade or give the Rockets exactly what they're seeking. Every player has a price, even former MVPs, and there's no harm in the Sixers waiting to see just how much Houston's price for Harden drops.

In this Jan. 21, 2019 file photo, Philadelphia 76ers' Ben Simmons, right, goes up for a shot against Houston Rockets' James Harden during the second half of an NBA game in Philadelphia.

'Uninterested' in playing with Wall

Harden practiced with the Houston Rockets on Monday for the first time this season after missing the early part of camp while talk swirls that he wants out.

Harden reported to camp late amid reports he is looking to be traded. He was absent for Houston's first two preseason games as he went through the NBA's COVID-19 testing protocols.

Meanwhile, the purpose of the Houston Rockets trading Russell Westbrook to the Washington Wizards in exchange for John Wall was two-fold: The Rockets could ship out an unhappy player, but also bring in a new guy who Harden might be interested in playing with.

It doesn't seem like that second part is going to happen.

ESPN's Ramona Shelburne and Adrian Wojnarowski reported on Monday morning that Wall's arrival from Washington has changed nothing for Harden. He's "unmoved and uninterested" in forming a partnership with Wall and still wants the Rockets to trade him so he can get a "fresh start" with a new team.

Harden may be actively trying to leave, but Wall is still hopeful that the two of them will get a chance to play together, and that Harden will want to play with him.

"I think me and James can be a heck of a combination," Wall told reporters after Sunday's preseason game. "I just hope we get the opportunity to get into the regular season and see how it goes."

Wall and Harden might get a chance to play together in the regular season, but not because Harden has had a change of heart. It may take awhile for the Rockets to find a trade partner willing to give up the package they want. At least Wall can take comfort in this: According to ESPN, Harden's lack of interest in teaming up with Wall "isn't personal."

Despite his apparent disinterest in an on-court team-up with Wall and his desire to be traded, Harden reportedly told Rockets ownership that he plans to be "professional and engaged" once he joins the team. Though that behavior may just be a means to an end.

For the Rockets, this is necessary for the team to operate under new coach Stephen Silas while also allowing for some leverage in the trade market to get closer to full value for Harden. The appearance of a distressed asset only hinders an organization in making a trade of this magnitude, and Harden has expressed understanding of that concept, as well as the idea that it may take time to find a trade that returns appropriate value to the Rockets, sources said.

Harden will never get out of Houston if he acts like he wants out of Houston. No team will want to trade for a player like that, which will make it harder for Houston to find a trade partner— and it's already pretty hard. Shelburne and Wojnarowski reported that Houston is still seeking a young franchise cornerstone plus first-round picks or high-end guys on rookie contracts in exchange for Harden.

Zion, CP3 get started

Zion Williamson got to work for his new coach. Chris Paul got started with a new set of teammates.

With a preseason that's shorter than usual before the NBA season opens on Dec. 22, teams don't have much time to ready themselves gradually. Some teams are playing just two exhibition games before things count.

That's probably why Williamson was still on the floor attacking the basket in the fourth quarter in Miami. New Orleans led the Heat comfortably in its debut under Stan Van Gundy, but the veteran coach had his young starters on the floor for more than 30 minutes.

Williamson, whose rookie season got off to a late start because of a knee injury, finished with 26 points and 11 rebounds. Brandon Ingram, last season's Most Improved Player, had 22 points, six rebounds and six assists.

Paul sat out Phoenix's preseason opener but was in the starting lineup for its game at Utah. The veteran point guard is yet another reason for optimism around the Suns after they went undefeated in the Walt Disney World bubble.

Lonzo Ball had 12 points and six assists for the Pelicans's 114-92 win against Miami, where they will play on Christmas Day. Josh Hart added 11 points.

The Heat rested Jimmy Butler in their first game since losing to the Lakers in the NBA Finals. Tyler Herro scored 17 points for Miami, and Duncan Robinson added 14.

Bam Adebayo finished with nine points and eight assists for the Heat.

Raptors 112, Hornets 109

In Charlotte, Fred VanVleet scored 23 points as Toronto completed its two-game sweep of the Hornets.

Terry Rozier scored 15 points for the Hornets, and Gordon Hayward had 14.

Rookie LaMelo Ball, the No. 3 pick in the draft, had 12 points and two assists in a reserve role. He had been scoreless on 0-for-5 shooting in Toronto's victory on Saturday.

Cavaliers 116, Pacers 106

In Cleveland, Dante Exum scored 23 points as the Cavaliers improved their preseason record to 2-0.

Andre Drummond had 17 points and 11 rebounds, and Darius Garland also scored 17 points. Rookie Isaac Okoro finished with 15 points.

Domantas Sabonis had 18 points and nine rebounds for the Pacers (0-2). Aaron Holiday added 16 points but Victor Oladipo had only nine on 2-for-11 shooting. ***(AP/NBC)***

Tokyo leader: Vaccines give hope for Olympics

TOKYO (AP)—The growing availability of coronavirus vaccines is a "ray of hope" for hosting the Olympics next summer, Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike said Monday as Japan struggles with a new surge in infections.

As host city, Tokyo will do "whatever it takes" to successfully achieve the games, which were postponed for a year until next July because of the pandemic, Koike said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"A few vaccines are now being distributed and are actually being used. It's a ray of hope," she said, citing the beginning of vaccinations last week in Britain and the distribution of vaccines starting this week in the United States.

"I expect this will also become a ray of hope for the Olympics and Paralympics," Koike said.

Japan's government has said it will secure enough vaccines to cover all citizens by next June.

Even without a mandatory lockdown, Japan survived earlier coronavirus surges better than the U.S. and most countries in Europe. It issued non-binding stay-home and non-essential business closure requests in April and May and still managed to slow the pace of infections.

During a second surge during the summer, Tokyo asked businesses to close early and urged residents to wear masks and follow other basic preventive measures.

"Japanese people are very cooperative, but by now they are getting complacent about the situation after repeated similar requests," Koike said. "I'm worried."

Infections have climbed higher as the central government has delayed taking stronger action to avoid further damaging the economy. Serious COVID-19 cases are steadily rising, burdening hospitals and affecting medical care for other patients, experts say.

Japan has reported 179,653 cases nationwide, including 2,585 deaths, as of Sunday. Tokyo, where the daily tally exceeded 600 last week, reported 305 new cases on Monday.

Koike said it is the central government's responsibility to protect citizens' health and safety, but there is a perception gap between it and the Tokyo government. "So, I do all I can to protect the health and lives of the residents in Tokyo," she said.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's government has pushed a discount travel campaign to support the tourism industry, ignoring warnings from experts that economic and social activity should be scaled down. On Monday, Suga finally announced a decision to halt the GoTo tourism campaign nationwide from Dec. 28 to Jan. 11 during the holiday travel season.

Suga also announced plans to compensate bars that cooperate with early-closure requests and provide special allowances for medical workers for their contribution to the fight against the coronavirus.

Jackson returns to save Ravens against Browns

CLEVELAND (AP) — Lamar Jackson emerged from the locker room, saved the game and maybe Baltimore's season.

Back on the field after being sidelined by cramps, Jackson threw a 44-yard touchdown pass to Marquise Brown and then set up Justin Tucker's 55-yard field goal with two seconds left, helping the Ravens to a wild 47-42 win over the Cleveland Browns that helped them stay in the playoff picture.

A Monday night game dripping with playoff intensity delivered with endless drama and stunning twists.

Tucker, who made 70 straight field goals inside 40 yards before he missed last week, had plenty of distance on his kick to give the Ravens (8-5) a much-needed win.

It was a gut punch for the Browns (9-4), who had rallied from a 14-point deficit to take the lead while Jackson was out.

The Browns had one last chance after Tucker's kick, but a series of laterals on the final play ended with a safety that affected gamblers all over the country. The Ravens were favored by three on the opening line.

The NFL's top two rushing teams combined for nine rushing touchdowns, tying a league record set in 1922.

Jackson rushed for two touchdowns while rescuing his teammates, who have overcome a COVID-19 outbreak and numerous scheduled changes so far in 2020.

With the Ravens down 42-35, Jackson returned from the locker after backup quarterback Trace McSorley suffered a leg injury when he slipped on a slick FirstEnergy Stadium field that was tough for players to cut on all night.

On fourth-and-5, Jackson calmly rolled to his right and found a wide-open Brown in the middle of the field and he easily outran Cleveland's defenders for the TD.

But Baker Mayfield wasn't going to be denied. He drove the Browns 75 yards, hitting running back Kareem Hunt for a 22-yard TD pass with 1:04 left.

Jackson then showed why he's a superstar.

The reigning NFL MVP completed two straight passes to tight end Mark Andrews for 28 yards and moved the Ravens in range for Tucker, one of the most accurate kickers in league history.

Mayfield had shaken off a costly interception and brought the Browns back, scrambling from the pocket a la Jackson and scoring on a run with 6:33 left.

Cleveland looked like a different team—like a playoff team.

Jackson was playing in his second game since returning from the COVID-19 list. Before he left late in the third quarter with the Ravens leading 34-20, he had rushed for 124 yards and two TDs.

Injured Browns cornerback Greedy Williams revealed on Twitter that he's been dealing with axillary nerve damage in his shoulder since getting hurt in training camp. He hasn't played this season.

Cleveland was counting on Williams to handle the starting cornerback spot opposite Denzel Ward, who missed his third straight game with a calf injury.

Jimmy Smith left in the second half with a shoulder injury. Marcus Peters left with a calf injury in the fourth quarter.

AP

Baltimore Ravens running back Gus Edwards (35) pushes Cleveland Browns middle linebacker B.J. Goodson (93) during the second half of an NFL game, Monday, Dec. 14, 2020, in Cleveland.

Hurts to start again for Eagles

Jalen Hurts earned another start.

The rookie quarterback will be behind center when the Philadelphia Eagles (4-8-1) visit the Arizona Cardinals (6-6) on Sunday.

Hurts led the Eagles to a 24-21 upset over the New Orleans Saints (10-3) in his first career start after replacing Carson Wentz.

"Jalen played well. He was a big part of the success we had on offense and obviously helping us win that football game," Eagles coach Doug Pederson said Monday.

Hurts ran for 106 yards and threw for 167 and one touchdown as Philadelphia snapped New Orleans' nine-game winning streak and ended its own four-game slide.

The Eagles racked up 413 total yards against the league's top-ranked defense. Miles Sanders had 115 yards rushing, including 82 on a TD run. The Saints hadn't allowed a 100-yard rusher in the previous 55 games before Hurts and Sanders each reached that mark.

Hurts wasn't sacked, the first time Philadelphia's depleted offensive line didn't allow one this season. Wentz has been sacked 50 times.

"One of the things that Jalen did well when he was out of the pocket and there was nowhere to run or nowhere to throw is that he threw the ball away and that helps your offensive line," Pederson said. "It doesn't put you in a bad situation. Doesn't put you in a second-and-long situation or third-and-long situation. I think that looking at the offensive line, really, across the board, they all played extremely well."

Wentz's $128 million, four-year contract extension signed in June 2019 kicks in next season. He was struggling through the worst season of his five-year career before Pederson benched him in the second half of last week's loss at Green Bay.

The Eagles face a major decision because Wentz's deal contained a then-NFL record $107.9 million in guaranteed money, including $66 million guaranteed at signing. Wentz's salary cap amount next year is $34.7 million. The team would incur a significant cap hit by releasing him or trading him so their best option would be to figure out a way to have him regain his old form.

Resurgent Bills close in on 1st AFC East title since 1995

NEW YORK (AP)—Brandon Beane could have easily stayed in Carolina, where he spent 19 years working his way up the Panthers' front-office ranks, if only because it felt comfortable and safe.

Instead, he took the riskier option by gambling on himself in May 2017, and placing faith in the assurances made by owners Terry and Kim Pegula to accept the challenge of helping resuscitate a losing franchise.

"This was an opportunity in a place that's been down for so long that had such a great tradition," Beane said last week upon signing a four-year contract extension as general manager that locks him up through 2025.

"How exciting would it be to get this thing turned around and host playoff games here?" he added. "That's been the goal all along. And I think at the end of the day, hopefully, we can get that done this year."

What appeared unimaginable in January 2017—when the Bills were in the midst of yet another regime change following coach Rex Ryan's dismissal and GM Doug Whaley's end-of-season press conference in which he claimed to know little of what was going on—seems suddenly attainable.

Under Beane's and coach Sean McDermott's patiently driven vision to build stability and sustainable success in Buffalo, the Bills (10-3) are in position to clinch their third playoff berth in four years and, more emphatically, claim their first AFC East title since 1995.

Break out the Bills' Zubaz pants, and order a round of beer and wings, because Buffalo is prepping for a party—socially distanced, mind you—it's not enjoyed since the first Clinton Administration. The Bills' magic number to clinch the division is down to one—a win or a Miami Dolphins loss—with three weeks remaining.

The mood in Buffalo is electric.

Even though fans aren't allowed to attend home games because of the coronavirus pandemic, it didn't prevent a small contingent to gather at the stadium's street entrance in the wee hours of Monday morning to cheer on every car that exited following Buffalo's convincing 26-15 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers.

These, of course, are the same faithful fans who braved sub-zero degree temperatures on Dec. 31, 2017, to greet the Bills' arrival from Miami after clinching a playoff berth to end a 17-year postseason drought.

The 2020 Bills are a much more complete team in having been rebuilt through the draft and free agency. They're led by third-year quarterback in Josh Allen who is challenging a number of Hall of Famer Jim Kelly's single-season passing and scoring records, and feature a defense suddenly flexing an attacking identity.

Both were in evidence against the Steelers, beginning with the defense enjoying its best outing of the year.

Safety Taron Johnson scored on a momentum-turning 51-yard interception return to put the Bills up 9-7 in the final minute of the first half. And cornerback Levi Wallace ensured the lead would hold up by ending the Steelers' final drive with another interception.

The Bills limited Pittsburgh to a season-low 14 first downs, 224 yards offense, forced eight punts and allowed just 1 of 10 on third-down opportunities.

Allen overcame a sluggish first half by engineering touchdown drives on Buffalo's first two possessions of the third quarter. And the offense secured the win by running out the final 7:11 following Wallace's interception.

In his eighth season in Buffalo, defensive end Jerry Hughes is the Bills' longest-serving active player, and noted the transformation he's seen in a team now conditioned to expect making the playoffs. He was among the players dancing on the sideline as the game came to a close.

Referring to Buffalo's area code, Hughes said: "Guys were yelling, 'Club 716 is open!'"

The party might just be getting started.

Re-signing Realmuto critical to Phillies, Harper

PHILADELPHIA—More than two and a half months have passed since Bryce Harper threw down the gauntlet and said, "J.T. Realmuto needs to be our catcher next year. Anybody that's the best at their position—hitting and fielding—needs to be signed and that is J.T. Realmuto. I don't think that should even be a question."

The Realmuto situation is one of the most critical—and potentially thorny—that Dave Dombrowski has inherited as new Phillies president of baseball operations. The team has a glaring hole at catcher and Realmuto is immensely popular with fans—and the $330 million man who plays right field.

Scott Boras, Harper's agent, will conduct his annual December state of the game (and his clients) news conference via Zoom on Tuesday afternoon.

Boras probably won't comment in depth about Harper's current feelings on the Realmuto situation because it involves another agent's player.

AP

In this September 23, 2020 file photo, Philadelphia Phillies designated hitter Bryce Harper (3) is congratulated by first baseman J.T. Realmuto (10) after his home run against the Washington Nationals during their game at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C.

But he really doesn't have to. From his actions during the summer, to his comments after the Phillies' last game of the season, Harper has made it clear he won't be happy if Realmuto is not back with the Phillies in 2021.

Manager Joe Girardi was asked Monday if that was something he worried about. After all, Harper is one of the highest-profile players in the game and his mindset—good or bad—can influence a clubhouse.

"I think you always worry about how players are going to handle things when things maybe don't go exactly the way they want or they think they should go, or the way it is," Girardi said. "But, obviously, I'll sit down and have discussions about him with him, and I'm sure Dave will probably have discussions with Bryce about, 'Look, we want to win just as bad as you do. Trust us. And we're going to do everything we can to bring a championship to Philadelphia. Sometimes things don't go exactly the way you want, but you've got to trust us. You've got to trust Dave and what Dave's going to do.'

"There's friendships that sometimes, too, play a role in that, and I get that. I've been with teammates that I loved being a teammate with and the next year they're not there and it's a little bit difficult. But you form new relationships and you get involved in the season and then it just kind of becomes normal again. But in a time where you're not extremely busy, I think you probably think about it a lot more."

For the record, the Phillies have not ruled out re-signing Realmuto. In fact, managing partner John Middleton has called it a priority. The team is currently monitoring Realmuto's market. The Mets had been seen as a strong challenger for the All-Star catcher's services, but they have signed James McCann. The Nationals, Blue Jays, Yankees, Astros and Angels could all still be fits for Realmuto, but the Phils can't be ruled out at this stage of the offseason. And while it's true that Dombrowski now oversees all Phillies baseball matters, determining whether or not to re-sign Realmuto would be a financial decision that would extend to the ownership level.

Girardi is a former catcher. He and Realmuto built a solid bond during the manager's first year in Philadelphia in 2020. Girardi said he'd be happy to speak with Realmuto, but, ultimately, this recruitment will come down to dollars. All teams lost revenues in 2020 because there were no fans in the stands and that has impacted budgets around the game.

"You know, I've done it with young players to sign with us," Girardi said of the possibility of speaking with Realmuto. "I'll do whatever it takes. I'll do it. I believe that's part of my job and part of my job is selling people on this organization. It doesn't matter if it's a software engineer or it's in the analytical department or it's a Double-A pitching coach or a player. I believe in this organization and that's part of my job."

With only one big-league ready catcher on the 40-man roster, backup Andrew Knapp, Girardi acknowledged the need for a Plan B and Plan C should Realmuto sign elsewhere. Free agents who could interest the Phillies include Curt Casali, Mike Zunino and Kurt Suzuki. But, right now, Girardi is not tossing and turning at night, wondering who his catcher will be.

"There's still a lot of the offseason left, and I think Dave just got here and he understands what he needs to do and what we need to address," Girardi said. "But I think that we will figure out where we are over the next week or so and continue to try to improve our club.

"I'm sure the market is going to have a lot to do with things as we move forward. I don't know how fast the market is going to move. With the uncertainty of when fans might be in the stands again, that affects how you might spend this winter. There's still a lot of things up in the air."

Regardless of who his catcher is in 2021, Girardi expects to preside over a team that can make a run at breaking a nine-year postseason drought, the longest in the National League. ***(AP/NBC)***

GAMES

From Page 20

table tennis, va'a (canoe), and Micronesian All-Around on the roll. Teqball, a football-based sport that is played on a curved table with rules similar to table tennis, is also being considered on the program. The Micronesian Games Council and representatives of the 10 island-nations will be meeting again next year to finalize the sports calendar.

Besides the sports events and schedule, the Marshall Islands have also provided updates on the Micro Games venues.

The opening and closing ceremonies, athletics, beach volleyball, and fast-pitch softball will be held at the Jenrok Sports Complex, which is being built in two phases. Phase 1 of the $9.13-million facility was completed in March this year and Phase 2 completion is scheduled for Nov. 2021.

Other venues (construction and rehabilitation are also set to be completed next year) are the Educational Cultural Center (basketball and volleyball medal round) and Marshall Islands High School Gymnasium (volleyball preliminaries). Repairs and improvements on the venues for the tennis, table tennis, swimming, wrestling, and weightlifting have been completed, while the Marshall Islands High School will be the Athletes Village.

SHANE

From Page 20

as he was also ranked No. 2 behind M.J. Camacho in the Mini II during the Dec. 6 competition. Igitol, Edina, and Melshy debuted in the series.

The MRA competitive races will continue this Sunday, as the group encourages its members to keep training for future and bigger tournaments while they are waiting for the construction of the new racetrack at the Marianas Motocross Park at the former CowTown Raceway.

MRA would like also to thank 4Ever CNMI, Mobil, and Pacific Trading, Co. for supporting last weekend's races.

Besides the Expert Open, Novice, Veterans, and Minis I and II races, MRA also held competitions in the Peewee I and II and ATV and results will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Thursday edition.

Two riders make a turn along the course. TEDDY CORPUZ

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In this screen grab, Mari Alvarez flies after passing through a hill during the Mini I and II race in last Sunday's Marianas Racing Association event at the Kan Pacific grounds.

Rockets want Simmons, 3 top picks for Harden

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Jackson returns to save Ravens against Browns

PAGE 18

Shane back on top

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Shane Alvarez worked his way back on top of the Expert Class during the Marianas Racing Association event last Sunday at the Kan Pacific grounds.

TEDDY CORPUZ
Ray Yumul (327), Keone Macaranas (10), and Byron Castro (29) compete in the combined Novice/Veterans Open race during last Sunday's Marianas Racing Association event at the Kan Pacific grounds.

Shane, who won the Nov. 29 race, but dropped to third in the Dec. 6 event, reclaimed the No. 1 spot in the division after besting five other riders. He prevailed over Angelito Hernaez, Christian Camacho (ATV), Corry Pangelinan, Cuki Alvarez, and Melvin Cepeda.

The Dec. 13 event was Hernaez's second runner-up finish in the Expert Class since MRA started the series of races late last month. He was leading in the Dec. 6 race before losing the driver's seat to Cuki, who this time missed a podium finish after reaching the Top 3 in the first two events. Cuki and Shane were in a standoff for first place in the Nov. 29 event, but the latter lost in the tiebreak to fall to second spot.

In the Novice Class, Pangelinan made it three in a row after beating seven other riders in their heat.

The Novice and Veterans Open riders raced together with Pangelinan winning over Melvin Cepeda, Patrick Cabrera, Byron Castro, Ray Yumul, Keoni Macaranas, Christian Camacho, and Ton Basa (ATV).

In the Veterans Open ranking, Cepeda came in at first, while Cabrera and Yumul notched second and third places, respectively.

Meanwhile, Mari Alvarez returned to the Kan Pacific grounds after missing the Dec. 6 races and ruled the Minis I and II.

Mari, who defeated E.J. Taimanao in first leg of the series, got her second victory out of the three events after outclassing Ethan Yumul, Maribel Igitol, Edina Cepeda, Devin Yumul, and Melshy Cepeda. With Mari returning to the race track, MRA had four female riders in the Mini I and II for the first time.

Ethan Yumul bagged his second runner-up honors,

See SHANE on Page 19

Competition dates, more events in Micro Games

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Two events have been added to the program of the 2022 Micronesian Games and another one is being considered as the quadrennial competition will take place in the Marshall Islands from July 25 to Aug. 5.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, updates on the 10th edition of the Micro Games have been limited. However, last week during the Micronesian Games Council's general assembly, the Marshall Islands shared developments about the event, including the final schedule and proposed sports to be played in the competition.

Weightlifting and wrestling have been added to the initial list submitted when the Marshall Islands won the bidding for the 2022 event during the 9th Micronesian Games in Yap in 2018. The two sports will join athletics, basketball (5 vs 5 and 3x3), volleyball (indoor and beach), fast-pitch softball (women's), tennis, spearfishing, swimming,

See GAMES on Page 19

MARSHALL ISLANDS SWIM FEDERATION
Marshall Islands swimmers compete in a meet last year at the Kwajalein Swimming Pool, which is among the facilities ready to host events for the 2022 Micronesian Games.

JOSEPH CHIN
Shane Alvarez shows some flashy moves during the Expert Open race.